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THE

METROPOLIS.

A Novel,

BY THE AUTHOR OF LITTLE HYDROGEN, OR THE DEVIL ON TWO STICKS IN LONDON.

———————— to shew
The very age and body of the time.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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INTRODUCTION.

THE motives which induced my friend to travel on the Continent, for mere improvement, which she states to be the case, was not the only one: her own account of what passed, and the circumstances attendant on an attachment of no common cast, appeared to me to be matter worthy of forming a novel; and the more so, because truth is always preferable to fiction, and real life to imaginary existence. The occurrences of the moment, are, likewise, more attractive than those which have passed away; and whatever can give us a faithful picture of men and of manners, cannot be devoid of utility.

My

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My friend tells her own little story without prejudice, and without scandal, resentment, and pique, which are so often indulged in by modern novel writers, that it is not the least qualification of an author to be in good humour, and to wish to inspire in the reader, a similar feeling. This is, certainly, the case with my friend, who, whilst she smiles over the foibles and failings of our neighbours on the Continent, and of our friends at home, does not spare her own, and in whose work, although there is no assumption, as good a moral may be found, as in works of greater weight, and of more importance.

I shall, therefore, no longer intrude on my reader's patience by further prefatory matter, but proceed, as the proxy of my friend, in her story; giving it, as nearly as possible, in her own words.

THE

METROPOLIS.

Il cor nelle parole. PASTOR FIDO.

CHAPTER I.

IF Lady —— ——'s eyes fall upon these pages, she will expect a wild romance—the vehicle of family anecdote and of family dishonour. If Mrs. —— of Berkley Square read it, she will expect all the secrets of the town. Let neither be alarmed. I shall betray no secrets. I shall, in general, touch manners, not men. Only when truth and circumstance require it, shall any one be named; and then, under an inviola-

ble anonyme. My own life has been romance enough, without disturbing their fire sides. My adventures have been sufficient to fill up more than these three volumes: yet do I hope to be able to avoid both egotism and prolixity in my detail.

There is a puzzle, the solution of which is, that "un soupir vient souvent d'un souvenir." I could write it in hieroglyphics; but as I wish to be easily understood, and to veil in mystery nothing unnecessarily, I shall state in plain English prose and acknowledge the truth, namely, that "a sigh escapes often from remembrance dear." Whilst I am perusing these untutored pages, I look back to the past as to a dream.

I am twenty-five years of age: yet is it so? To those who have doubled that period, what must it be? On life as on a journey by night, "clouds and

and darkness rest." We start in high spirits; we can never go fast enough; pleasure is our perspective; fashion, the spur which impels us; we flirt; we chat; we trifle by the road; yet does the time seem long. With feverish impatience, we expect something unattained. A ray of reflective reason awakens us from our slumbers. We start with astonishment at the distance which we have gone, beyond what we expected; and we are lost in amazement at the little solid good which has accrued from our journey.

A friend of mine compares life to a night passed in the mail. You embark in darkness (says he); you feel about for your neighbour; you guess at him or her; conversation commences; a man is entertaining and a woman appears fair; you think that you could, with pleasure, continue on a very long journey with your companions; the female voice is attractive; her touch is gentle; she sighs perhaps; she seems

listless; she grows interesting; the man is complaisant, his ideas suit yours; you appear to have corresponding sympathies. Morning breaks, and—your fellow travellers are nothing of what you pictured them! You are far from home; and all is disappointment.

It seems as if I shrunk from my own story, by telling that of others. It may be so. We generally ease our embarrassment, and prepare our mind, under any trial or trouble, by some desultory and prefatory conversation previous to our going into the main concern.——I now begin.

Some years have rolled away—ah me! how rapidly—since my mother and I went on a visit to a person whom I shall call Mr. Doricourt, a most amiable man, retired in the autumn of life, from a diplomatic career, in which he had spent thirty long years.

years. His experience of mankind could not be questioned. And what did it produce?—a love for retirement. He had a large family—many daughters; and he hesitated to expose them to the world, to bring them too early into high life; all other he knew not. His retreat in the country was, however, most judiciously managed, and he, there, endeavoured to prepare his children for the world, by providing them with as large a portion of wisdom and theoretical experience as possible. All that books and expensive teachers, some from town, some from abroad, could furnish, he ensured for them; but the richest mine of knowledge and of information was in himself.

After a morning's walk, or ride, they repaired to the salle des travaux, as it was called, and the pencil and brush were employed on the finest Greek and Roman models. A music room was near, where he himself was a performer, and where an Italian,

resident in the house, was leader of the band. The harp, the harpsichord, the violoncello, the guittar, the clarionette, and the flute, all entered into the morning's practice.

A French governess taught dancing to the ladies; and the evening was destined to exhibit what the morning planned. They also got up a little dramatic fable in French, and elocution was not neglected. In the morning walks, reading was blended, and the good father gave ambulatory lectures on composition: as, on a starry evening, he used to give his family information in astronomy. In the hall was kept a locked up box, into which any one who pleased, of the family or of its guests, might deposit his jeux d'esprit, in poetry, prose, composition, or anecdote, and of which he made a fair copy once a week and read to the party. This, as well as the album, produced much amusement. A fine library was open to

all,

all, as well as a billiard table; but cards and dice were forbidden.

It is impossible to say how happily this family lived, nor how delighted every one was who became an inmate of this hospitable and improving roof. It was my fate, as I have already stated, to make one of its guests in the year ——. I must not say what. It was autumn; and a party of youths came down to shoot. The more intellectual circle did not join them; but liberty was the order of the day, and each took that amusement, for which he was best suited.

At the head of the youthful visitors was the Duke of ——. To say that he was handsome, is to say nothing. How could the son of the most beautiful of women be otherwise—particularly when so strongly resembling her? But there was a gravity, a

pensiveness in his features, which created a very painful interest in my bosom. He very soon beheld me with a partial eye, and selected me for the companion of his walks and rides; neglecting the amusement of shooting, and abandoning his gay and youthful party. This was soon perceived by all, which gave me pain; but, I confess, (for candor shall be my device) a pain closely connected with pleasure, and that pleasure as closely linked with pride.——I shall now say a few words of his associates, Lord Lackworth, the Honorable Tom Turflove and a Reverend dependant from college.

Lord Lackworth, the eldest son of a peer, seemed perfectly to appreciate his future weight in life, and to consider his father as a tenant at the end of his lease; for his favorite and very offensive diurnal conversation was, what improvements he should make on his estates when the old Lord would

be

be no more, and how he should act in the House of Peers. This, with his manifesto-like annunciation, that he should marry a very rich heiress, and that none other need have any pretensions to his hand, or even to his regard (which, by the bye, rather offended me, for I took it to myself, although I hated him), formed the mass of his discourse. Sometimes, indeed, he obligingly informed us that he was the best shot and the best horseman in the world; or he turned into ridicule the clergyman, whose only use, he said, was sticking to the bottle to oblige him, when the Duke voted himself polite, as his Lordship termed it, when Tom was fast asleep, and when their host gave them a broad hint that intoxication was beneath a gentleman, by drinking wine and water, and by appearing tired of the sight of the decanters. But, added Lord Lackworth, "I must take a hint; I'm a fine fellow to disappoint hint-givers. If a fellow seems to want to cease drinking, I stick to him the

longer; and if a woman pretends (mark the word) to be tired of my company, I stay the longer."

In fine, his Lordship's character is to make a convenience of the world, and to turn people to his account. To his own sex he is a dangerous companion, from living harder than most men, and from being fortunate at play. To our sex, he is a very traditore, and has, though yet a young man, planted thorns innumerable in the female breast. Some say, though without foundation, that he won a good deal of money of the Duke, which causes their intimacy; for he has no friends. Others say that he courts him, merely because he is a Duke. I was fortunate enough to have one hit at him, when telling his story of women *pretending* to be tired of him. I asked him if he thought that I ever pretended to be tired of him; but, with his inexhaustible fund of impudence, he beat me by answering, " upon my soul (pulling up his

his boot) I never took sufficient notice to be able to answer the question."

Tom Turflove lives in the sporting fields, and even to women boasts of his health, of his strength, of his constitution, in a way that I feel to be rude as well as selfish. He thinks himself very handsome, and affects to undervalue women, and to regard them as quite secondary considerations to sporting. This is a piece of duplicity; for he has found this assumed neglect to produce advances from women intent of subduing at all risks. But he ill chose his field at Mr. Doricourt's; for his daughters are too highly bred, and have minds too well cultivated, not to despise the man and his artifice. This character seems to be born for a groom, for a game-keeper, or for a mail-coachman; but capricious fortune has placed him in another sphere.

The

The Clergyman was a mere thing, a being dependant on others, a title's shade, a rich man's walking stick,—a longer after chaises and four and high bred company, yet a cypher in either,—a man selling his health and his morality to be a coronet's companion, or to be laid up with Tokay or some very expensive fluid. The Duke has promised this man church promotion, if Lord Lackworth don't burn him out before the vacancy occurs. He is now like Cato, his life, his death, his bane and antidote are all before him—premature death or lawn sleeves will speedily be the reverend gentleman's portion.

Far be it from me to hint that intoxication is a recommendation to church preferment; but, that complaisance (unbecoming in a clergyman) which devotes time, health and patience to a patron's ennui, to his caprices and vices; which witnesses, without reproach, his follies, and makes allowance for the defects of his

his character, his haughtiness, his overbearing pride, his acidity, his variability; which endures his coldness, slights, rude jokes, contempt and irony, and then makes friends again,—this patience and long-suffering has oft led on to greatness—and, although it be not generally known, yet it is not less true, that his late Grace of —— gave a rich benefice to a man for being a good companion, and for (to use his own terms) seeing him out. Private tutors and travelling companions will frown at this remark, and abuse the writer of it; I know them. I have seen too much, to be contradicted here; but, henceforth, I promise not to meddle with the cloth.

A very few days passed before the Duke's attachment for me became so visible, that I was an object of envy and of remark,—of envy to my friend's eldest daughter, and of remark to the odious triumvirate just described. Perhaps I was a little giddy with satis-

satisfaction at this gratifying preference; for my dear mother requested me, as we retired to rest, to be more circumspect, to be more distant to the Duke, and to take care not to make enemies. She added, that nothing but her great love for me induced her to wound my feelings, for she perceived a struggling tear in my eye-lid. A woman, however indiscreet, cannot bear the accusation; and often, alas! would rather encounter the world's blame than allow her pride to be mortified. I was ungrateful enough to wish that my parent loved me less, provided that she controlled me not. I could almost have said, "Honor me, Madam, henceforth, with your indifference."

I did not sleep a wink all night; and I awoke feverish and uncomfortable. My eyes met those of his Grace the moment I entered the breakfast room; and my heart, without being very deeply affected, leaped for joy. I saw pleasure dawn in his countenance.

nance. "You are late," said his Grace; or at least, "sad hours seem long." I sighed, and observed that I had a sick head ache. "Then," said he, "let me drive you out in my curricle: it is a more passive exercise than either riding or walking." "Had you not better," replied I, with a smile, "go out shooting?" "You have," rejoined he, "disgusted me of shooting; you say it is a cruel amusement; so allow me to be your coachman to day; your humble servant I always am." This flattery, I fear, was music in my ears; but I had a letter to write, and I feared I should not be able to keep up all day. He looked regret and disappointment. He was very dry with Jane Doricourt; this delighted me: very cross to the clergyman; this charmed me. How shocking thus to glory in the mischief which I had done! but truth must be avowed.

I retired to my room after breakfast. The Duke's eyes followed me to the door, and were fixed upon

upon the last light which glimmered through its close. I now sighed in earnest, and wished Mama's lecture unheard; but yet did I think this little bush-fighting scene a politic affair. I heard the girls practising. The Duke attended them, for it rained. Jane sung a Scot's song, which much annoyed me. There was art in the choice; and I felt that I loved Jane less than the day before. The song was one of that feeling poet Burns.

" Ah! why should fate such pleasure take,
" Life's dearest bonds un-twining!
" Or why so sweet a flower as love
" Depend on Fortune's smiling."

No impression was made by this song; or I should have broken my heart. I thought that the dinner bell never would ring; yet it was that which was to unite us all again. Heavily and wearily crept on the hours until I saw the butler with powdered

powdered head, running across towards the out-offices to jog the cook's memory, and heard the welcome bell strike up its brazen note.

I remained the very last to enter the dining saloon; and I perceived his Grace lingering in order to see whether I left my room or not. I caught his eye on the stair-case, and he handed me into the room. He spoke not for a moment; but the pause—the look—the giving of the hand, were such as I shall never forget. These trivialities are very important in love. His eyes spoke pity and regard: are you really ill (said they),—would that I could suffer for you! Then there was none of the mere courtesy of an arm and hand gracefully outstretched, which means, "allow me to hand your ladyship to your seat," or, "am I a welcome conductor on this occasion?" or—insipidly—"here, take my hand, custom commands it, but my heart is not of the party."

party." No—no—his was given, as the Italians say, con francheza e con amore. He seemed as if he gave me a share in all his titles, and in all his property—a participation in all his feelings, a partnership in all his chances and changes of life, with—that little hand.

I know not who was in the room, when first we entered; but my lady mother faced us soon after we proceeded towards the top of the table, and motioned me to speak to her. I separated from him, and lost my place. This was what was meant; for she whispered me not to sit by the Duke. I was ready to faint; the girls blushed and smiled; Lord Lackworth looked impertinently at me; the Duke appeared confused; and I remained silent for a few seconds. Our well-bred host relieved me, by addressing his discourse to me, by rejoicing that I looked better, and by paying me marked attention, until I recovered from my embarrassment.

The

The dinner seemed immeasureably long; and this was the only tedious and unpleasant day which I passed at ——— Lodge; but it was also the last. I was greatly relieveed on quitting the desert for coffee, and not disappointed at finding the Duke shortly follow the ladies. I had a book in my hand. He took it from me, and opening its leaves, pointed out the following passage. It was Tasso's.

" Celan le selve angui, leoni id orsi,
" Dentro il lor verde: tu dentro il bel petto
" Nasconde odio dis degno ed impietade
" Fere pejjor ch'angui, leoni ed orsi."

He asked me if I knew any one to whom that passage alluded. I said " certainly not." He looked round, pressed my hand, and replied—" so I hope." I refused to dance afterwards; but was forced to do so. I stood up with young Doricourt. The Duke looked with amazement, for he had asked me to waltz.

I could

I could not bear to be misrepresented in his mind. I therefore, as I finished the quadrille, assured him that I was unequal to a waltz, and that I should not have stood up even in a quadrille if not forced by importunities to do so. He thanked me for "putting his heart at rest"——such was the term—and for my ingenuousness.

The rest of the evening passed quicker, in proportion, than all the day; for I had a weight off my mind. I retired as usual to rest; but rest retired from me. I read; I walked about my room; I watched the break of day. At length my eye-lids became heavy; and I ventured to return to my pillow, and slept pretty tranquilly for three hours. Our beaux were going out shooting; and Turflove was making a dreadful noise, calling his servant, whistling for his dogs, rattling up and down stairs, and humming a waltz to himself. At last I was relieved by

by hearing him shut the door and go out. I might have slept a little longer but for this disturbance; as it was I could not afterwards recal sleep to my pillow. I now resolved to rise at once, to dress hastily, and to walk across the shrubbery into the wood.

I was in the act of pulling the bell for my maid, when, glancing a look towards my chamber door, I beheld a letter thrust under it. I took it, and found, what I at first expected,—that it was from the Duke. It was brief; it was respectful; but it was full of warmth and of sincerity, and very explicitly conveyed an offer of marriage. I leave a young unmarried female to conceive what I felt at such a letter from a man of high rank and fortune, and, above all, from the man of my heart. The postscript of the letter said, that he should absent himself with the shooting party in order to give me time for reflection, and, if his suit found favor in my sight, I

was

was to appear at dinner in a rose-coloured dress, in which case he would speak to my mother the ensuing morning. I sat down lost in thought. When the warning bell rung for breakfast, I was not able to mix in the throng.

I accordingly sent my maid down to request that a cup of tea might be brought to my room; and I, at the same time, begged my mother to come to me as soon as breakfast was over. I considered it as my first duty to consult her in a matter of such infinite moment. She had ever merited my duty and my confidence; and I was now doubly called upon to evince both.

My mother was thunderstruck on perusing the letter; and, with a calmness and dignity which I shall never forget, thus harrangued me. "My dearest child, you are indeed my only comfort. That

should

should be no obstacle to my parting with you on the present occasion, when so suitable and so flattering an offer occurs; but there are other considerations, besides our own private feelings or interests. The Duke is not of age; he is even younger than yourself; your acquaintance has been short; his attachment, or rather his passion, has been rapid. I am convinced that neither the Duchess his mother, nor his guardians would consent to his wedding the daughter of a peer, whose rage for electioneering and for play has in no small degree reduced us; and I should feel too proud to allow a clandestine marriage to take place, and to bear the accusation of having deceived the young man. He is moreover very young, rather imprudent, and may be changeable when it will be too late. Mr. Doricourt also will feel hurt at a hasty match being made up in his house, and will scarcely hold himself blameless in the transaction; for I know that the late Duke involved his estates,

estates, and that a very great and a very rich match is looked forward to, as a means of retrieving all these numerous incumbrances, and of restoring the family to its former splendor. I therefore count on your good sense, on your self-control, on your love and duty for me, on your heroism on this occasion, to sustain the disappointment, and to act as I direct you."

Here she threw herself on my neck, embraced me, and shed tears. Her maternal tenderness fixed my resolve; and after a few natural tears, I assured her I would obey her in every thing, and would consider nothing as a sacrifice which made her happy. She embraced me again, and went to consult Mr. Doricourt, observing, as she left the room, that if his opinion met hers, we should very soon determine what was to be done. She returned in an hour; it was not a winged one; it seemed at least a day. "My child," said

said she, on entering the room, "we are fixed in our resolve; in one hour we depart. You must not see the Duke; I have written him a letter, and you may add what you please; but we must not tarry here. It would be disgraceful to us to violate the laws of hospitality, or to bring reproach on the roof where so much friendship dwells."

For a considerable time, I had not the power of speech, and tears alone spoke the conflict of my bosom. Not to see the Duke again was agony; but to bid him farewell was despair and madness. I obeyed, and was in our travelling carriage within the hour. Mr. Doricourt alone knew the reason for our precipitate retreat. The rest of the party was made to believe that we had received accounts of the illness of a near relation, and were therefore forced to take this sudden step. The girls affected to feel regret at my departure; but I detected a secret satisfaction in

their eyes: they had no rival now with the beaux. The youngest kissed me, and squeezed out a tear from her eye-lid: it was of that inferior water, which dissimulation, self-interest, or fancy counterfeits to gain an end, to disarm a husband, to get a reconciliation when in the wrong, or to cheat our own sex, and particularly a rival. Far different is that gem, that brilliant of the first water, which beams in affection's eye, which trembles on the cheek of sensibility, or which reflects the object we adore. Tears are as various as jewels; their value differs greatly; and women have them at command. I saw the insincerity of these; whilst Jane, in a most provokingly insipid tone, said, "I don't know what the Duke will do when he hears of your departure," laying great emphasis on the word do, and making as light of my concern as her regret and regard were at bidding me farewell. "Shall I," continued she, "say any thing to him for you?" "Nothing," replied I, gravely. We embraced,

not

not cordially, and parted. Mr. Doricourt saluted us with much sincerity, and seemed to say, "Adieu, I honour your conduct, and you have greatly relieved my mind." The letter was left for his Grace; but I could add nothing to it. My mother just observed that I was indisposed, and thanked him in the most becoming terms for his regard and partiality to me.

Our journey was uninteresting, and it was resolved that we should not long sojourn in London, but depart for the Continent. Our plans were, however, to depend greatly on our dispatches from —— Lodge. A heroine of romance would, here, fall dangerously ill and keep her bed, would perhaps lose her reason for a time, or lay violent hands on herself, or run away and immure herself in a convent, or finally, would perform something wonderful; but as truth is my guide, I shall state the plain fact, which was, that I bore this severe affliction with great forti-

tude, though I became so tremulously nervous, that the opening of a door threw me into a spasmodic affection, and that I was absent, low spirited, and debilitated to a great degree.

Our dispatches from the ci-devant ambassador, contained an account of the violence of the Duke's distress, in the first instance,—of his determination to follow us to town in the second,—of his writing, which letter was intercepted by my mother, and of the Duchess and of his guardians being apprized of what had passed. The party at the Hall was now dispersed; Lord Lackworth run away with the French governess and deserted her; Tom Turflove almost broke his neck in hunting, and was borne home in great danger; the Clergyman got an excellent living, and the next year married a Right Honorable, to whose son he had been travelling companion; the young ladies were all heart broken at losing their beaux;

beaux; and it was resolved to keep them another winter in retirement before they were to be presented at Court and ushered into the beau monde. The Duke accompanied his mother to —— Castle; and it was agreed that he should go abroad without loss of time. What a general defeat!

This being the case, we retired to Woodbine Cottage on the banks of the Thames, until further dispatches should be forwarded to us, marking his Grace's destination, in order that we might take an opposite direction, for it was resolved to separate us as far as possible. I took up my pen more than once to address him whom alone I could ever love; but female pride withheld me from writing. Since he had been prevailed upon to be silent, it was my duty to be so likewise. I had not, at this time, the knowledge of the suppressed letter, and doubtless we neither of us appeared, what we were, in each others

eyes. Had a certain countess been as circumspect as my dear mother, instead of putting her daughter in the way of a certain illustrious personage abroad, one less unhappy match would have been made, and wounded pride and wounded dignity might have been spared on either side.

CHAPTER II.

THREE days and not a letter! we were both in consternation, for our situation began to be critical. Our sudden departure from —— Hall, our hiding ourselves at the Cottage, the Duke being fetched home by his parent and guardians, their family consultation, the preparation for his Grace's sudden departure abroad; all began to create suspicion and get wind. Servants will tattle; all great people's secrets come out that way. The Honorable Mrs. G— might have been with her first husband 'till now but for these spies. Our story began to be told for us, without our troubling ourselves; very delicate hints escaped the public prints; scandal was resolved to have a dish of us; and our good female friends did all they could to assist us.

Lady Mildew (for so I shall call my cousin) insinuated, that I was about to form a very improper connection, which induced my mother to lock me up, and that the Duke had been dismissed Mr. Doricourt's house for an affair of gallantry in the family. This was most offensive. I should have preferred the truth being told; but Lord Lackworth's affair had been confounded with the Duke's, and scandal made up the rest. A vile morning paper hinted that "a certain Duke's neglect of a Right Honorable sentimental lady had so affected her spirits, that she was under the treatment of Dr. Willis; that the daily bulletins described her hurry of spirits to be a little abated; but that a gold ring and a licence were considered by the faculty as the only radical cure." Who the obliging person was who inserted this article, we know not. My mother was so enraged at it, at first, that she consulted her lawyer with a view of prosecuting for libel; but it was, afterwards, determined to pass it by

by in silent contempt, as an opposite conduct would only produce further exposure.

In spite of all orders to say "not at home," both in town and in the country, Lady Mildew found her way down to Woodbine Cottage, passed the porter (it was Mr. Doricourt's opinion that she would have eluded the vigilance of Cerberus), and gained admission to the drawing-room. She entered the folding-doors with great stage effect; and beginning her scene with me, approached. She forced out a few crocodile-tears, and, kissing me between my eye-brows, and gently tapping my cheek, exclaimed, "poor thing, don't fret." Then, turning majestically to my mother, "Cousin, I hope that nothing has occurred to tarnish the honor of the ancient and noble family of ——, to which I belong." Here she drew herself up, and looked as stiff as a poker.

"Could our ancestors look up," continued she, "it would rouse them from their graves. So many Generals and Admirals, besides a Lord Chamberlain, two Lords of the Bed Chamber, four High Sheriffs in succession of one county, the county town thrice represented in Parliament by our name—then again, Lord John, who was in the wars with the Duke of Argyle, and Sir Roger who accompanied William Duke of Cumberland, my great maternal grand uncle, who was a Count of the Holy Roman Empire, and Marmaduke, who was Lord Lieuteuant of the county in King George the first's time; Sir Alexander, who married" —— "In mercy stop," cried my mother. "What on earth, cousin, can make you rave this way? Are you in a waking dream, or have you been lately in the neighbourhood of Bethlem? Explain yourself, I pray you, for you quite alarm us, and you are as inexplicable as a treaty in sanscrit would be to me."

I have

" I have not been," said she, " without my trials; but my pride and my high sense of honor—aye, let me see a coxcomb who would dare to lay a snare for my virtue; I would show him." Again my mother stopped her in her heroics, and begged to know what all this meant. She here took out her aromatic vinegar-box, and twitched and played off hysterics, and called for a glass of Madeira, and then for a toast: she had come fasting,—and her stomach was so weak,—and her heart so tender,—and she cried again,—and took another glass of Madeira,—and sobbed out that she had been told that I could not appear in town, but that as soon as I could be removed I was to go abroad. Here she took another glass of Madeira, gave a deep sigh, and fell back in her chair. I fetched her a glass of water; but she motioned me to take it away: it was not good for her complaint. She at length came to herself. My mother again chid her for her folly, assuring her that she would

would get to the bottom of this vile insinuation: and here ended our conversation.

The good lady took an early dinner, talked a great deal of nonsense, drank a great deal of Madeira, and went home in high spirits, after cutting up every body of our acquaintance. During dinner, I was determined to have a hit at her; and, on my mother's asking me to carve a fowl, I observed, "Give it to my cousin, she dissects better than I." She took it; but giving a short cough, hem! she cleared herself and called for another glass of wine. She now said she was afraid of being stopped going home. We therefore dispatched a servant on horseback with her, who reported her safe arrival, and that she slept all the way.

I must now say a very few words about her Ladyship. She is tall, thin, and fifty-five years of age.

age. How she escaped matrimony for the first thirty years of her life, I know not; but, for the last twenty-five, she has been marked for an aged spinster. Strong tea, strong cordials, cards and scandal, are her food and all her enjoyment. She is universally detested, yet universally received; so that she is a pillar of all routes, of ——'s library, &c. of a morning, and appears highly dressed at ths Asylum on a Sunday. These are my cousins haunts and habits. Her person stiff, her air repulsive, her forehead disdainful, her eyes small, piercing, and of a light grey cast, her nose thin and sharp; flat lips, false teeth, false hair and a false heart complete her picture. The reader may know her, if he be a frequenter of North and South Audley Streets and of Grosvenor Square. There may she be often seen with a very tall footman, and a very small spaniel. Other company are shy of her in a morning: but as a fourth at whist,

whist, it is another matter; for she is a keen and a good player.

She had scarcely been in town three days, when she wrote to say that our coming there was of imperious necessity; that a thousand false, malicious reports were afloat, and that I must show myself. "Come," wrote she, "and face your enemies: appear in public, and put the malevolent to confusion. Let my fair cousin assert her triumph in all and in most public circles; it is indispensible,—it is for the honor of our house,—for the dignity of our predecessors,—for the justification of ourselves."

I don't know whether my mother would have taken the trouble of attending to this pompous summons if, at the same time, we had not heard from Mr. Doricourt, who announced the Duke's departure for

for Russia, and for a northern tour of all Europe. This decided us to move to the southward; and it also put it in our power to reside long enough in town to settle our affairs previous to our trip to the Continent. The Duke had taken his departure, and the field was free for us. We therefore went to our town residence, where Lady Mildew received us with as much pomp and state as if our house were her own, and as if she had all the merit of bringing us thither in order to assert our innocence. At all this we smiled; but my heart sunk when I thought how far distant was one whom I loved, and to whom I was not permitted to say adieu.

On my arrival, an anonymous letter was delivered to me, in these words:—"Your silence seals my destiny. I am miserable for life." I knew the hand, and I was overwhelmed at perusing it. I now saw

saw that he had written to me; but that his letters had been intercepted. I was in despair—but it was too late.

Now did morning visits besiege our house, and my mother thought it right to see every body. I started from my seat a hundred times in a morning from the sudden concussions of the knocker's thunder; the rattling of carriages kept my head in a constant state of pain; and the succession of faces, the one impression destroying the other, wore out my mind and left no trace behind, like wave propelling wave along and defacing the different impressions on the sea sand. I felt that I cared for nobody, that all were alike, that the same gentle smile, practised civility and hackney'd welcome came from all; that the fiddle faddle of the beaux was odious, and the trifling of the belles was fatiguing. I caught myself making the same answers to all, almost before answer

was

was required. The women eyed me with curiosity: the men viewed me with insipidity. I could have retired from the world, for it was irksome to me.

Doricourt now came to town. We had a string of engagements, as many cards as would thatch a house, as many quadrille parties, at homes, conversaziones, dejunées, and divertisemens as we could attend in a month. Little was I inclined to go to any of them; but it was deemed proper. Mr. D. said that infamous reports had gone abroad, that he had traced the origin of one of them to Sir Absolute Apathy (so I shall call the western Knight), and that he would sift it to the bottom. He insisted, at the same time, that we should attend Lady Elder's evening party: all the world was to be there——"All the world? No! he who was all the world to me could not be there!"

The

The inquiring eye of every female was upon me. If woman err, who has she most to dread? Woman.——If she want a severer doom than even her crime demands, who would pronounce it? Her own sex; for

" —— lovelier things have mercy shown
" To every failing but their own,
" And every woe a tear can claim,
" Except an erring sister's shame."

But strong in my innocence, I met every look with mild endurance, or with indignant repulsion. Some defeated gazers dropt their eye-lid in confusion; others, more schooled in duplicity, converted impertinent curiosity into complaisant smiles, taking an interest in my well being; the older stagers passed from severity into indifference, and endeavoured to appear unconscious that they looked on me, by casting a general would-be unmeaning eye around. But nature is often honester than we wish her to be; and,

like

like the half-drilled servant of an embarrassed person of quality, either mutinies and will not lie, or lies so awkwardly, that detection accompanies every word. —Dear Lady ——! I shall never forget her; she sprang forward to meet me, and almost planted me in her bosom. How much goodness! How much sensibility! Her's is no vulgar soul. There is feeling and tenderness, dignity and sentiment, refinement and courtliness in every line which she writes, in every word which she utters. Let those censure her who dare: they had better imitate her.

Then I had a prattling groupe about me, and a buz of flatterers. "Will you dance?" said my cousin in the Guards, making the word dance as long as my arm, and dragging out his words like a miser at his guineas, as though every one cost him a world, and was too valuable to be thrown away. Yet is he a good creature after all. The mawkish

tepidity

tepidity of his manner is only affectation; his heart is in the right place. I was about to refuse; but was advised not; for I heard that it was rumoured, by my own sex, that I was too much out of spirits to dance, too much in love to mingle with the gay and thoughtless throng. The men too said to each other, "it is of no use to ask her, unless you have a ducal mantle to offer as your recommendation." How unspeakably ill natured!

I therefore stood up amidst the "how d'ye dos, my love,—how well you look,—how glad I am to see you once more amongst us," of my own sex, and the nods and signs of the other sex, with "Colonel you're a happy man,—glad to see your ladyship in good health and spirits," with many other chit-chat stuff too tedious to mention. Lord L—— made his attack on my cousin, whose only answer was, "Do L—— leave us a little room, and don't talk such d—d

d—d nonsense, or (with a most insipid drawl) as Diogenes says, get out of my sunshine."

After the first waltz, I was in great request; for the dancing party was small, and I was a novelty. I was therefore forced to write down the list of my engagés on my tablets. When about the middle of them, Sir Mortimer came up, all airs and affectation, and, with his scarcely audible voice and assumed *lithp*, said, "Lady —— I must bring you to book now, for it is my turn." Never did I dance so much, with so very little inclination.

At supper time the Colonel sat on one side of me and the —— Ambassador on the other. The Colonel informed me that malice had been very active against me, that one person positively asserted that I had eloped with the Duke, that another gave it out that I was certainly secretly married to him (this was comparatively

comparatively better), that the third report was so superlatively bad that I cannot name it; "but," added he, "for part of this we may thank Sir Absolute, who is the most unfeeling wretch in the world. He would sacrifice any one's honor to his d—d dry joke, or to what he thinks wit. But he'll repent it. Doricourt will play (what I must not say with him); and I must have my little private hour with him too. He's in a devil of a scrape. Now as for me, I am too lazy to quarrel, too selfish to put myself in a passion and to spoil my looks, by being as inflamed as the sign of the red lion. I am sanguine about nothing, would not flurry myself for a fortune, nor put myself out of my way for a dukedom. I did refuse a seat in parliament; and I take every thing so coolly that I believe I have neither friends nor enemies, because I cannot take the trouble of making either. But (looking half animated) if he has said all that I hear, I must be under the disagreeable necessity of parading him." Here he took

took a pinch of snuff. "And if I do," resumed he, "I won't let him walk home. It's rather too hot to fight, and a d—d bore to get up to do so; but I must set up for his honor, and keep myself cool with lemonade, and take my chance of the brute. I believe that I am the best shot of the two; only it's so troublesome to practise."

By this one trait the Colonel may be known. He is as brave as a lion; only it makes a fellow look heated to exercise this quality unless friend or country force him. He is as kind as the breath of zephyr to the drooping flower; but it's so unbecoming to seem to court any one or to do them an active service: yet if the case be urgent,—why he'll put himself out of his way, he'll take it very coolly, but he'll do the deed. My heart overflows when I think of his manly conduct on the above trying occasion; and my eye

eye filled with gratitude, whilst my heart thrilled with apprehension for his safety at the period in question.

At this moment the Ambassador interrupted us by paying me some fulsome compliments in broken English, which I answered in French in order to relieve him. He now composed me a bouquet of roses, &c. and, on presenting it, said, "Voila! un bouquet qui vous sied bien. La rose, la fleur d'amour, la pensée, elle est pour vous, et l' eternelle (everlasting), les entiment que vous meritez." I thanked him in the best way I could; but the Colonel, taking another pinch of snuff out of his musical box, cried, "D—— nonsence, Cousin, don't mind him;"—his box now struck up the Tyrolese, and caused a laugh at our quarter of the table.

The

The morning was now far advanced, and I withdrew. The broad wandering eyes, the sarcastic smiles, the looks, the winks, the elbowing of each other, now seemed to turn in my favour; nods, shakes of the hands, approving smiles, looks of approbation followed me out of the room. Our hostess was uncommonly attentive to me. Doricourt was like a father, and my cousin's support was of the first dignity of friendship and of manliness, mingled, however, with the true essence of the Guards, the very cream of conceit and the cool affected indifference of fashion.

As we left the room, he observed to me, "the Duchess dowager eyed you just as an old tabby cat does a linnet or canary-bird,—as if she could make a breakfast of you, a dejuné à la fourchette, where the dark divan of dingy dowagers and of wrinkled

spinsters meet to cut up their acquaintances, and to wash them down with liqueurs." He handed my mother and myself to our carriage. We set him down and parted.

My dear mother seemed in high spirits when we got home. She was pleased to say that I looked well, that I danced well, that I behaved just as she wished. This was a crown and sceptre to me at this moment. I required to feel well with myself. My mind grew a little calmer; I embraced my good parent, and retired to rest. I, however, read the Duke's short anonymous letter; and I somehow cherished a hope that things would change their aspect, that hope might brighten our perspective, that the worst was past. I got quite cheerful, and enjoyed the best night's rest I had since the first week which I passed at ——— Hall. I shall therefore leave my readers

readers for a few hours. May undisturbed repose be theirs, and, whether they slumber over these pages or not, I shall say to them, remilissimamente—buona notte.

CHAPTER III.

"LA vie n'est qu'un songe," said Marshal Saxe (I believe). The name matters not: but so I always found it. When I waked from my very profound sleep, I was told that it was one o'clock in the afternoon. Lady Mildew had called, and was answered, "pas visible," which was a great relief to me. Mr. Doricourt sent a letter to invite himself to dinner: this pleased me too. I dressed, breakfasted, sat down to my harp, and was just practising "La, ci darem la mano," when my cousin, the Colonel, was announced. My mother had just gone to the admiral's, who was suddenly taken ill; and I was now to hear the detail of his interview with Sir Absolute.

I trembled

I trembled lest he should have to meet him, and I flew towards my cousin with great warmth and much emotion, which he answered by, "By Juno, how overpoweringly warm! those carnations too are so strong, that it is quite impossible to stand them! 'pon my life I must open t'other window and look out of the viranda, for it's warm enough here to kill the devil. But I say, how are you?" (all most amazingly drawled out.) Here my Italian greyhound leaped upon him. "Too civil by half," cried he. "Do cousin put him out; the best of dogs are offensive in warm weather. I beg your pardon, however; you'll say that I am d—d rude; but you know that I take every thing very coolly."

I rung and had the dog removed. "I say," (speaking to the servant) "Saunders, be so good as to bring me a glass of sugar and water, or," calling him back again, "some iced water, if possible." (To

me.) "I beg your pardon, you see that I make myself quite at home! d—d cool of me: but I am faint, and slept ill last night; I've settled the Knight though." (To the servant.) "I know that you have no iced water, so just give me some sugar and water." "Yes, Colonel." I was all anxiety. He now flacked his boot with a silk handkerchief, looked at his spurs, and took out a cambric one, and wiped his face. Then he stalked up to the glass, admired himself awhile, and cried, "I am as heated as a mail-coachman. I'll take a Bath and eat six ices before I dine, for half a farthing: indeed, I'd go to bed again; but I see that you are impatient, so we must return to the Knight."

My mother entered at this moment. (From the Colonel.) "How's your uncle? Much better? Law! I thought he was going to make a die of it! Why he's as old as the Hills." (My mother.) "For shame."

shame." "Not at all; what are old folks good for? I declare I would always have people young, or else"——

This is not an expression peculiar to the affected Colonel. There are a number of Exquisites who, in contradistinction and in opposition to high authority, assert that old women should never appear out; that a woman is good for nothing beyond forty; and I heard a most highly in request fashionable, a Hussar of Hussars, say, in presence of his mother, that he never wished a woman to live beyond fifty, and that if he was an absolute monarch, he would have them shot at that age. I shuddered at the brutal expression, and so did the poor old Duchess of L—— now no more. But there's an affectation in this brutality; and as for my cousin, with all his insipidity, no one respects the weakness of age more

than he. But a display of virtue is—too much trouble!

(My mother.) "I won't hear you: it is quite like a reprobate to talk so." (The Colonel.) "A reprobate! not a bit: you know that I would not take the trouble to be a reprobate." (My mother, slapping him good humouredly on the arm.) "I know very little about you, and less good." "True." "But," she continued, "I know that you have pensioned off two servants." "Aye, that one does for decency's sake, and that they may'nt want and be ——." Here she put her hand upon his lips. "Hold your tongue, you wicked one; don't mar a noble action by a bad word." "Ha! ha! ha! All stuff, cousin; a fellow must do some good. Indeed I'd do a great deal more if I could do it without exertion: I am a lazy fellow to be sure."

"But

"But now for a dish of scandal, finely cooked up too. I have spoiled their hash for them" (a sort of simile). "It is too ridiculous; but Sir Absolute will perhaps have a little more feeling hereafter.—— Ha!" (smacking his lips) "iced water, by Jupiter! I could fancy myself at Naples again! how good of you, cousin!" (he drinks.) "Come," said my mother impatiently, "take it coolly, and then let us have your detail." "Don't be in a hurry—it's a most old-fashioned, unbecoming thing. One pinch of snuff, and then a touch of the Knight." Here he took a pinch of snuff, and brushed his cravat with his hand, with a peculiar studied grace.

"Well, I saw the old file this morning, as talkative and as ugly as usual; but my preface rather annoyed him. I told him what I had heard; but that I hoped that he was not the author of the report; for, said I, I am not tired of life, and I hate

trouble; but should it be so, I must have a meeting with you within an hour (he looked pale), and, added I, taking it d—d coolly, and offering him a pinch of snuff, you had better make the most of your time; for I shall not part with you alive. I'll destroy you by ——." My mother stopped him from swearing, although he sung out his oath and his defiance as softly as a dress-maker would recommend a becoming fashion.

(The Colonel in continuance.) "I do hate the plague of fighting; but what must be, must be; and as I am for guard to-morrow, the sooner we have this matter settled the better. In case of accident, I have provided a surgeon and every thing else which you can wish (the old man shook like a leaf). So, Sir, explain this matter to my satisfaction, or make your will, if you like it better.——I had," continued he, "got Colonel Manley for a second; but the fellow was so drunk,

drunk, that I left him at my lodgings drinking soda water, and having wet napkins put round his head by my French fellow. However, a man of straw would have done; I only wanted a second for the fashion of the thing: form must be observed. I should have made short work of it; not that I fancy fighting; it is in d— bad taste; but the case was urgent, and I could not be bored with a parley which might have cut off my other engagements."

To shorten the story as much as possible, the effect of the Colonel's visit was to intimidate Sir Absolute, to make him write a most abject apology, and to give up Lord Lackworth and Lady Mildew as the origin of every thing. Lord Lackworth, on arriving in town from the Hall, was asked respecting me: his answer was, "that some said that the Duke had run away with me, and others that I had run away with the Duke; that some asserted that I was married, and

and others denied the fact; but that how it was he neither knew nor cared, for that he hated me." On Lady Mildew's being interrogated how she found me on her visit to Woodbine Cottage, her answer was (with a grave and doleful shake of the head), "as well as can be expected." This was more than enough for Sir Absolute Apathy, and he circulated the story round the town, receiving additions and improvements from Berkley Square to Harley Street, and from Harley Street to Pall Mall, and even to the Horse Guards. But the Knight, on this occasion, got such a fright, that he left town for three months, and seems since to have lost his tongue. General O—— observed of him, that the Colonel had not quite killed him; but that he left him nearly speechless. The Knight gave it out too (in companies where he was sure that it would not be repeated to my cousin), that he took him for the most lady-like creature in the world; but that he now considered

sidered him as a complete fire-eater, a very devil incarnate.

The Colonel now left us, insipidly giving us each, with great composure, the first joint of his index-finger, as a great demonstration of kindness, and more than he usually did. He informed us at parting, that, instead of fighting, he was now going to buy a horse at Tattersall's, which he liked just as well. "Lord John," said he, "thought to tempt me to a private bargain; but he ought to know that I am never eager about any thing; so I'll take my chance at the hammer. The animal is a perfect picture; so is our friend, Lady Charlotte; yet a man is not to lose his reason for either of them. None of your violent passions for me." I blushed; it was a lesson; but not meant as such. He now beckoned his groom, mounted his horse, threw the rein half

on

on his neck, yawned, stretched himself, and went off in an easy canter.

Our next business was to send for Lady Mildew, and to thank her for her exertions in our behalf. She called Lord Lackworth a monster, and Sir Absolute an ideot. She allowed, however, that she had made use of the words "as well as can be expected," for, added she, "of all the troubles in the world, love, I should suppose (correcting herself), must be the greatest. But I am really very unfortunate; no one more discreet (we thought otherwise), yet I can hardly open my mouth but I am accused of injuring some one. I can scarcely make my little remark, but it is con-strued (elongating and syllabing it) into evil. If I say any thing, it must be scandal! 'Tis most unjust, 'cousin, and I can't put up with it." She here shed tears again, played spasms, and called for Madeira.

We parted very coolly; and, from this moment, we dropped her Ladyship's acquaintance. I am told that we were called by the various names of unjust, ungrateful, uncertain and base; but we never paid any attention to that. Our intimacy died away; and we have been much less slandered ever since. We have known less about town-talk; but we are all the more tranquil; and, on these subjects, in my opinion, "Ignorance is bliss;" for how shocking a traffic it is, in high life, nay (I believe) in all ranks, to barter the good name of one person for the good opinion of another, or rather to exchange slander for welcome,—the loss of one friend for the short-lived countenance of another,—to be a carver of character, a leveller of reputations, one who, deserving little of the world, must degrade all around one. I had rather live in solitude all my life, than have the first, the gayest, the most numerous society upon such a tenure; but many a male and female fashionable

owe

owe their situation in the world to this baneful quality.

In a few days after my cousin's visit, we received certain intelligence of his Grace being far on his northern tour; and we were determined, after a round of engagements, (all deemed necessary for form sake) to quit town and to pursue our southern tour. The list was to be got through:—one conversazione, two quadrille-balls, private theatricals at the Marquess's, a subscription concert, the Ambassador's stiff dinner-party, one at home of our own, and one fancy ball. Time was, when this list would have pleased me; but now it appeared a fatigue. I prepared for it nevertheless, and got through it at last. Time waiteth not, and however it linger, we soon come to the end of it.

Our conversazione was at Lady Bookworm's.

Her

Her ladyship being very plain, she turned her back upon the loves and graces, or rather they turned their back on her, and she ranged herself with Minerva and the Muses. Her ladyship's great delight is to be consulted, to have a plan of a building submitted to her opinion, or a new work read to her previous to its being printed, or a piece of poetry dedicated to her, and, above all, to correspond with learned men abroad. She has attended lectures on chemistry, anatomy, and natural philosophy: she reasons logically, and is the most gentlemanlike lady of my acquaintance. Foreign artists are her delight; and she is surrounded by German authors.

On the night of her conversazione we had about eight nations present. We were edified for an hour with a lecture on the atomic system, not one atom of which I understood. Sir Dandy Delirium read his new play to us, which, if performed, will

be a theatrical opiate. A young medical Exquisite (for even the drudging professions aspire to exquisitism) not a hundred miles from Jermyn Street, was one of the party. He possesses more patience than patients, in his profession; and, as he cannot prevail upon his acquaintance to turn sick for his benefit, he has conceived the plan of becoming a tourist, a very gentlemanlike trade now o'days, and a fashionable mode of raising the wind. He submitted his last tour through Sweeden to her ladyship, who advises him to print it. If he does so, it will inevitably travel from the bookseller's to the grocer's, for the best executed and the most worthless thing in it is an engraving of the author.

I very soon got tired of this very learned circle, and retired early. The Ambassador handed me to my carriage: he was invited because he is a foreigner only. He was, on that occasion, very anxious

to

to be witty; and, speaking of a thin, dry-looking old man, the picture of decay, he said, "what can that skeleton be invited for?" "He is a great antiquarian." "Ma foi, je le crois," cried he; "c'est vraiment un antique; il a certainement oublié de se faire enterrer." Then added he, in broken English, "vat for non since!" and laughed at the gentleman's producing, what he called, a parcel of green farthings, which gave a bad smell to his fingers. These were old coins, on which I could perceive no impression save that of rust and of dirt.

The Ambassador's dinner was all form and ceremony. It consisted of the corps diplomatique and their ladies; and a certain electioneering ambassadress took the lead. We had a very bad turn out of British females, mostly dowagers and elderly unmarrieds. The civic Baronet was there, and was sadly in the dumps at the soup being cold, and at a ragout

ragout being spoiled. The dinner lasted vastly too long; some four hours at table; what a loss of time! I do not much admire either le corps diplomatique, or les corps etrangers; and all the benefit I received from the concern was a practising of French and of Italian. The men, however, evinced one species of refinement, namely that of joining the ladies very early at coffee. I got away about twelve, when, I understand the whole ended in a regular gaming party, so fond are foreigners of play. At this juncture, the epicurean Baronet put his hands in his pockets and withdrew.

Of the private theatricals I shall say little. The performers in private life were few; but they were aided by the Argyle-school. The scenery was scanty, bad, and ill managed. Jean de Paris was the piece, and seemed to be pitched upon merely to favor the flirtation of two of the party. Jean de Paris was

imperfect

imperfect in his part: and Mr. N—— did not display the best pronunciation of French. How few private characters are fit for scenic representation even in their own language, much less in a foreign one!

Although bursts of applause followed the performance, I thought that it went off very flatly. Mrs. B——m a would-be leader of fashion, was there, with her pockets full of tickets for her protegé's benefit. How troublesome are these characters, who make themselves mere ticket-porters for theatrical and other professional performers!

Speaking of private French theatricals, puts me in mind of the Argyle Rooms, and of the weakness of our noblesse in putting up with the very inferior performers, fourth rate at best, who come over here to insult our national taste, and who carry the vulgarity of the Fauxbourgs St. Antoine and St. Marceau,

ceau, of the quartier du Temple and la Rapée into our court-end of the town and into our first circles, where they are not only endured but caressed. These persons are the sweepings of minor theatres, or debutantes of mauvaise grace; yet the idea of the concern being a foreign one suffices for our easy fashionables —such second-hand furniture as a Perlet or a Fusil, who, not for the sake of making a pun, but for that of truth, it must be allowed, would go off no where else but with the fanciful of London.

We ought to admit of nothing from a foreign stage but the most select and the most spirited—the very last fashion (as in dress); for its novelty, in general, is its greatest recommendation. It is not because it is merely French, (a bad compliment indeed to our national taste) that it is, or ought to be introduced, but because it is novel, interesting, light, full of variety, or that it has some real merit. We are

quite

quite near enough to France to receive every novelty, in dramatic as well as in any other fashion, and why should we, as if the Atlantic were between us, receive stale fashions and damaged goods, whilst even the Americans receive their fashions twice a quarter, wind and weather permitting: so say my dress-maker and habit-maker, and they are less hoaxed than the Argyle-committee.

Were it once understood that we were to have a French as well as an Italian theatre, although, at the present juncture, it could not be licenced, from the unpopularity of the measure, yet, might we, by subscription, have the very first performers, who would come, in rotation, for a short time; for every thing gives way to British gold. In London we have but to say we will have a thing, and it is done. The orient and the occident, the most remote and frozen regions; all the luxuries and produce of the Continent find

find their way to the British market. But there is a want of judgment in the Argyle-committee; and it appears as if the boast of having French plays was quite sufficient, without looking at all to the excellence of the performers: for which the French laugh at us with their convulsive ah! bah! and, "it is good enough for les Anglais;" and thus do they pass off their very worst theatrical lumber upon us. Nay some of the performers come pour se degourder, to find the use of their limbs, and to make a practising-room of the British boards.

I could say something nearly similar respecting French companions of all casts; but it does not quite become a female pen. Yet do Lord M——, a noble Marquess, the rich Mr. L——, and hundreds of others support establishments for ladies, on whom the fastidious and self-sufficient Paris merveilleux would bestow his wanted ah! bah! accompanied by the most

most contemptuous smile on English taste. What has injured this last subject in a great measure, is, the conduct of our countrymen abroad, their herding together, their bacchanalian imprudences, their real want of taste and discrimination in Paris, and the very few, who, assimilating themselves to the manners of the country, could really set the fashion, and furnish the most brilliant examples for imitation, which our nobility is capable of doing.

I now came to the fancy ball! This assemblage was one of the most brilliant which I ever joined. All the beauty and fashion of the first circle were there—a numerous yet select, an illustrious yet truly happy collection. The exterior of the house was one blaze of light; its approaches, a wood of carriages. Nodding feathers, sparkling gems, blooming complexions heightened by the warmth of the apartment and improved by the hand of art, glittered and

glowed on every side. The rose, in all its shades, was there, from its modest opening bud scarcely daring to meet the solar beam, to the full blown maturity of the marchesa, and to the damask rose of Lady A——.

The interior of the mansion possessed all that marble, porphyry, granite, bronze, carving, sculpture, architecture, painting and ornament could produce. The centre room, of many pillars, multiplied by immense mirrors and rendered dazzling by the reflection of lights and their multiplied effect from thus being returned and doubled again and again upon the eye, was of singular elegance and taste. It also breathed a coolness of drapery which, in such a crowd, appeared to alter the climate, and to give the scene an entirely new attraction. The drapery of the curtains, and the pannels of the room were lilac and pale yellow, with silver fringe. Drab, crimson, and or molu borders were the furniture of the next apartment.

ment. In this centre apartment, of which the ceiling was beautifully painted, and the floor very beautifully chalked, the spaces betwixt the pillars were filled by the rarest, the most expensive and the most odoriferous plants; the orchestra was concealed under an arch, masked by orange trees; and the tallest flowering myrtles which I ever saw were in vases, representing allegorical groupes, of high finish and of happy imitation. The lustres, the candelabras, the girandoles, and chandeliers were innumerable. The stair-case was hung with coloured lamps, and adorned with rose-trees and many foreign and native plants.

There were four dancing-rooms, and four distinct bands of music. A Turkish band in appropriate costume,—a German band for waltzes only, in the military Hussar uniform,—a French band for quadrilles, clad in dark green and silver,—and the invisible band, in which were a harp, an Irish pipe,

&c. All the servants had a fanciful uniform instead of the family livery, and this produced an excellent effect, being very costly and uncommonly splendid. It was plain scarlet, with lace and spangles in profusion. Admirable order prevailed amongst the servants, and every thing seemed to be done by clockwork, unlike a certain illustrious house, where (the domestics being absurdly indulged with liquor) universal confusion ensued.

Touching the intoxication of servants, I shall never forget when, in my childhood, I visited the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland (a relation). We made a tour through the country, and stopped three days with the late amiable Countess of B—lv—e, very different from the present one. We were going a dreary road ten miles to private theatricals, and her Ladyship's cautions to her two postillions were, "Mick and Barney, mind that you do not get drunk at

at the Castle, for fear any accident should happen, and when you come home you shall have as much as you can drink." "Depend upon us, my lady," said the postillions. They did keep sober: but, on their return, got so dreadfully tipsy, that the one kept his bed with sickness for two days, and the other was confined to the house with bruises from his fellow-servant, who "for love knocked him down." This, however, was better than disturbing the company.

Let any foreigner behold this scene, and tell me what they have on the Continent equal to it!—Not even national feasts, or royal banquets. I acknowledge that the Greek and Roman schools can produce the finest works of nature; that in Italy, stately piles of buildings can strike with awe and admiration; that, in their ruins even, such prostrate majesty appears as rivets your attention, and is unequalled elsewhere; but then add to the interior of

a splendid mansion, some of the works of Greece and of Rome, lights, costly ornaments, music, odours, living models of perfection, warm smiles, speaking and sparkling eyes, mirth, festivity, pleasure, attraction, dancing, fine attitudes, gentle beauty, and the magical appearance of an enchanted palace, and surely the effect must come more home to the senses than when the mind is absorbed in contemplating the breathing picture, or the broken column of ancient and past magnificence.

A ball is a delightful thing; but it is a very dangerous thing also. Nothing sets the heart straying more than these fancy balls. Mine was however gone, and I might say, brilliant as the scene was, "Il n'y a pas de fête, ou le cœur n'y est pas." About one o'clock pleasure was at its meridian: so little are people of fashion the slaves of time. The supper, exquisite and admirable as it was, was announced at two

two o'clock by the sound of bugles; dancing recommenced at four: and a very high sun lighted us to our couches. All was perfection; all was conducted in the best possible style; all was magnificence; yet there was no restraint.

Having said so much of the house and of the bill of fare, I must add a few lines respecting the company, and their various dresses; for every one, from the child of quality of fifteen up to the queen of diamonds of fifty (an age, entre nous, not so much out of date as might be imagined, but on the contrary in high request in the highest sphere), was habited in some character, costume, or fancy garb, as were also all from the Exquisite lordling to the grave judge. We had a number of Shakespeare's characters,—an Ariel, a Beatrice, an Anna Boleyne, and a fair Lady Jane Grey. The Pantheon was sifted for wood-nymphs and water-nymphs, for heathen di-

vinities, for a Mars, for an Apollo, for a Mercury, and for Bacchus with a Bacchanalian suite. There were also beaux and belles, in the Greek, Roman, old English, Spanish, Italian, German, Celtic and Tartar costume, all of whom played some part. There were groupes of musicians and singers, and bands of dancers, and reciters of scenic selections. One Italian bard sung beautifully; and the dancing groupe got up a ballet, "Les folies d'Espagne." Besides which, waltzes were danced in character; and we had an uniform for the quadrille party, and a good Highland groupe.

Some of the gay throng, however, quite mistook their characters. We had a female Cupid, and, I was going to say, a male Venus; for Lady Manly thought fit to represent that character, and appeared like a Patagonian. The Marquess of H—— was habited as a Turk, and looked more like a tailor; and

and Lord Emily (as I call him), a compound of paste and of perfume, thought he looked well as a Cossack. But why do I dwell on these little errors, when the whole was so admirable? In the most common occurrences of life, we all, and most particularly my sexi make these mistakes. An elderly woman, with a fine Grecian countenance, would command attention and admiration, did she look grave, dignified and pensive; whereas, having fine teeth, she is on a simper or broad grin incessantly, and affects all the frolicksomeness of the petite figure chiffoné of sixteen, quite round and all dimples and smiles. Sixteen again is insufferably proud, and she apes the donna superba, smiles contemptuously on all around her, and disarms the loves and graces, who would, otherwise, have conquered all before them on her account. The arch expression suits one countenance; yet will it assume another cast. Ringlets become an ivory neck; yet perhaps will she who pos-

sesses it adopt quite another arrangement; whilst the coarse, red bosom of a corpulent dame is rendered still more inflammable by an auburn ringlet heightening her heated appearance. Des fausses manières, gigglings, titterings, nibbling of lips, fanflirting and fidgetting the body about, disfigure many young women, and deprive them of half their attraction: so that it is not to be wondered at that so many of us err in dress, when in our most determined habits we wander so far from the graceful and from the becoming, in order to court the novel, the fanciful, and, above all, the foreign manners.

"We have here the very empire of fashion," said Lord Flutter to me, as we met in our promenade of the room "You then conceive fashion to be an absolute monarch," observed Sir Charles Caustic. "I believe there is more of the empire than of the commonwealth in it," continued he, "for our fashionables

ables generally contrive to ruin themselves sooner or later; but, my Lord, is this imperial monarchy of fashion hereditary or elective?" "Oh! certainly elective," replied the peer: "their legitimacy and the rights of kings have nothing to do with fashion. Certainly not." At this moment the R——t passed, and the subject was dropped. The splendid military uniform was his costume. Yet, there he mistakes again; for scarlet becomes him worse than any other colour. Blue is his most becoming dress. But, "chacun a son goût." "The greatest prince in Europe!" whispered Sir Charles. This he meant satirically, and arguing as a materialist. "Yes," answered Lord Flutter, with becoming spirit and loyalty, "if you calculate the triumphs of his arms, the moderation which has attended his conquests, the accomplishments of his mind, and the qualities of his heart —kindness, condescension and humanity, politeness, affability, and the highest polish; but, above all, when

when you throw into the scale the manly honor of governing a free people, you may call him the greatest prince in the world."

Here a band of troubadours approached us; and the peer passed from the baronet with an air of indignation. The troubadours supported their parts admirably, and sung appropriate songs. In a word, the assemblage of the élite of fashion will ever stand on record with the beau monde of the day. We separated, all in the best possible spirits; and it was not until I found myself alone, that I relapsed into a gentle state of melancholy which, of late, was wont to take possession of me in the midst, frequently, of the gayest scenes.

Miss Tattle called on me the next morning, in order to talk over the preceding night's amusement, or, as she called it, to talk over our acquaintance, which

which is nothing more nor less than to cut up every one, to abuse their dress, to feed scandal, and to indulge envy and spleen. "What a frightful head-dress Lady —— had on!" exclaimed she, almost before she was seated, "and in that respect she is always peculiarly awkward." "I do not think so at all," said I. "And" (without waiting for an answer) "what a hog in armour the Marchioness looked like! Lord Plagiary, as a Pilgrim, was ridiculous, as are his half-religious, half-nonsensical poems. Did you observe Mr. L——, how he watched his little wife? I don't blame him there; and did you mind how the full-blown roses clung to the Prince? Countess L—n danced as if she was a piece of clock-work wound up for the purpose; not the least look of ease, of gaiety, or of mirth in her! one might well say of her 'How much at variance were her feet and eyes.' And was any thing on earth half so out of character as the widow —— as a virgin of the sun! twice a bride,

bride, and now a very zealous candidate for a third matrimonial election! I think that she has cast her eye upon your cousin in the Guards: I shall pity him if he take her." I assured her that she might be easy on that head, and cut off, as quickly as I possibly could, a conversation which was odious to me. But there are women who prefer this talking over the night before, to the most pleasurable amusement in the world.

I had scarcely got rid of this female gossip when a male one made his appearance. "Ha!" said he, "I am glad to see your Ladyship up. I was fearful that the fatigue of last night would have been quite too much for you; I did not expect to be let in. You did not look altogether so well as usual," (looking attentively at me); "and we all thought that some attraction was wanting to put you in spirits. But was it not a delightful ball? By the bye, was not

Lady

Lady Mary ridiculously dressed? she a figure for Ariel! and Lady B—— for Apollo! Apollo's grandfather more like! The Duchess dowager too! how loaded with diamonds! surely that woman never means to be old! How Lord Dangerfield stuck to the Prince! he must be a great annoyance: there is such a thing as wearing out good nature." "I am sure," replied I, "that never happens to you." "Never; no never," said he, a little confused.

"But pray is it true that we are going to lose you? that you are going abroad immediately? I am sure that it cannot be for improvement or for education." "No," said I, "I am too old." "Not at all: but one cannot improve perfection, nor polish what is at its highest lustre." "Bien obligé; but in spite of that I am going immediately abroad, with a view of improvement, and in order to gain experience, and to see more of the world." "The world," said he,

he, " is London——the polished circles of that metropolis ; and I, who have travelled over most part of Europe, declare it to be so." " The authority," said I, " is undeniable ; but you must make some allowance for female curiosity, to gratify which, I am on the point of my departure." " Well," concluded he, it is right to go abroad, in order to have it to say that one has been there, and that is all. It is right, because it is fashionable : but, otherwise, mark me otherwise, for fashion must be obeyed, I should consider it as a deal of time and of money lost. It has, however, one advantage : it makes us relish home the more on our return ; just as we never know a friend's value, until absence has pointed it out to us. Wherefore fair Lady —— I shall withdraw ; assuring you of my very respectful attachmeut, and leaving my best remembrances to your Lady mother." He attempted to kiss my hand ; but I withdrew it ; and he made his exist.

Now poured in a host of visitors to take leave of us; and we had to listen to gossiping stories, various accounts of the Continent, all disagreeing, exaggerated descriptions of the state of France and of its inhabitants, some extolling both up to the skies. "We should never come back," said one: "we should find every thing so much gayer, and so much more luxurious than in England; their manners so easy, so mirthful, so much amusement in the country, every luxury too at so reasonable a price." "You'll soon be tired of your trip," exclaimed another; "you'll be overcharged and cheated on every article of life, poisoned with their want of cleanliness, terrified with the unsettled state of the country, disgusted with every thing." Very contradictory, in deed, thought I to myself: the truth must be between these two great contrasts. And so it was: neither was correct.

Our

Our visits lasted until dressing time. We resolved to look in at the Opera, and to be alone the next day, to dedicate it to letter writing, and to send round our empty carriage with tickets P. P. C. Adieus are mournful things, either to give or to receive. There is something more than melancholy in them. But I must not get gloomy. Away with the word; it savours of despair. The multiplicity of visits had distracted and divided our attentions. How insipid most of them! how insincere! how much we lose by multiplying our acquaintance to a great extent! The objects pass so rapidly by, that they leave no impression, save that on the dial of our clock, which tells us that time has flown without our perceiving it.

Upon second thoughts we determined on not going to the Opera, as we should be so overcome with enquiries and farewells. Our letter-writing day was

was a dull one. What a world of billets, of kind enquiries (sent for form sake), of at homes, of invitations, of thanks for kind enquiries and of visiting cards, I tore in pieces and ordered to be consigned to the flames! How many silly notes I was obliged to write to take leave! How many unwelcome ones I had to receive and to answer! I thought that my mother, myself and my cousin Gertrude would never have done.

"Do, my dear creature, (wrote Lady Modish) contrive to send me over the very last Paris fashions; I want to have them before the dress-makers and the vile trades-people." "Will you, my dear friend, think of your Caroline when in Paris, and send her a faithful account of all the secrets, scandal, chit-chat, and above all, a detail of what our countrymen are about? A few pair of gloves would be welcome, at the same time," was the burthern of Mrs. H. B——'s letter, that

that real and genuine fashionable. "Dear Lady ——, may I trouble you to get a box of perfumes conveyed to —— House? our English ones are nothing to them. My Lord —— is coming from Florence, and he will take them, en passant, from you; but I dare not trust to his memory nor to his taste to buy them. Health, and dissipation, pleasure and a speedy return. Yours ever,

LAURA."

This was the contents of another; added to commissions innumerable, and very seldom accompanied with the money requisite for the purchase.

In the midst of all this fatigue, a very happy event occurred, namely the sudden arrival of my brother from his regiment, on his promotion. He had long leave of absence, which enabled him to accompany us abroad; and now had I a natural protector! Now, for the first time, since I left —— Hall, I felt really

really in spirits, and fit to go through the world: but first let me describe its epitome in the following public masquerade, which my brother's arrival and his solicitations induced me to attend. Sir Herbert ——, his lady and some friends, kindly undertook to be our Ciceroni.

CHAPTER IV.

THIS public masquerade was numerously attended; and all the beauty and fashion in town were there.

Soberly habited in a Domino, with a half mask, and a female hanging on his arm, a certain illustrious Duke first attracted our attention. A Patagonian flower-girl, supposed to be a male in female attire, thus addressed him. "Royal Commander, you are known in spite of your disguise. Your little Prussian ally would have been a better arm-companion than Mrs. ——. Does Mrs. —— ever assume military command? And how do her chickens flourish? Oh! fie great Sir; your own noble air is better suited to your high descent than the air of Fulham and its vicinity; but we applaud your prudence in one thing, namely in

in keeping up appearances, and in allowing the illustrious —— as many of the canine race as she chooses, provided the principal whelp be left at liberty to roam where he pleases."

On this the Domino and Mrs. —— moved off, and the Patagonian then attacked a most noble Marquess. "Most noble horse-marine," said she, "why did you not appear in your amphibious character, with the head of a horse and the tail of a dolphin? Well may our state bark prosper with such heads at the helm? A pretty pilot indeed to weather the storm! Pray when did you raise your last annuity, or get into another money-scrape? and how is your favorite brunette, most noble Marquess? Moderate and cloudy? I know you, although you seem to be lost in a *fog*; but both you and the Baronet, lately arrived from Sandwich, would not be *mist* if you disappeared entirely from the head of affairs, or if you left the good

good ship Britanina to herself. You look as like a sailor" (this was his dress) "as a sea horse." The young nobleman escaped in the crowd.

A very portly couple now hove in sight. They loomed like something royal: the male represented the Grand Turk; the lady was a Queen Mab in folio. She was called a Duchess in perspective, being next door to that title; but she borrowed much of her consequence from her companion. A very smooth, soft skin was visible under her mask; but it was supposed that fifty she would never see more. These half country-plants, however, are quite the taste of the great man in question; the climate of royal gardens is most favourable to their growth; but if the good lady grows much more in the sunshine of power, she must be a monstrous favorite indeed. The Patagonian plagued her ladyship a good deal, but kept at awful distance from the Turk.

It

It is said that the Grand Seignor has long since thrown the handkerchief at Queen Mab, but has thrown off the mask of propriety and of all consideration towards a certain heavy appendage to royalty. In the character of a husband he is not particularly admired; but as a professor of every thing that is most elegant and fascinating, as a companion, or as a pattern of what a prince and a gentleman ought to be, he is unrivalled. Masks, revels, balls, puppet-shows and parade are his delight; and he appeared in very high spirits. His dress was splendid and beautiful. No man changes his coat oftener: blue and buff was once his favorite clothing; but he has left his friends to look blue by themselves, whilst royal scarlet is his favorite dress.

At this moment the Marquess of Mount St. Jean passed with a lady in the dress of a religious novice. He hailed, en passant, the Duke of ——.

"Your most obedient," said he to this gentle and amiable nobleman, "I found you out by your suavity of manner and by your gracefulness in dancing. By the bye, you have got an old partner of mine there; and although we did not pair kindly in our quadrille, yet she went off very well with you as a vis-a-vis. You have my best wishes. But now, gentle Duke, no more of the rouge et noir! A little economy; distrust not the monarch of the forest; and keep some of your timber and of your patrimonial inheritance for the evening of life. I feel interested for ye both. Fare ye well—je vous salue de tout mon cœur."

When it was explained to me by my Cicerone that this was a couple doubly divorced, I was quite astonished at the good understanding between them. The two husbands are great contrasts. The noble Marquess is a fighting man himself, a very hero; but in his onset in matrimonial life he aped the character

racter of Petruchio, and over played it. His Grace is as gentle as a dove, quite contented that the Duke John, his progenitor, should have been the fighting man of the family, and perfectly satisfied with battles on wood or on canvass. He has, however, been a gallant, gay Lothario, but is now what is called a reformed rake. The system of reform, however, always proceeding on reduction, he has reformed, or at least reduced his fortune considerably; yet did he, the other night, give a splendid ball and supper, his taste for expense surviving the physical power of gratification. This is no uncommon thing with elderly husbands; and elderly husbands are all the go. Every one wishes the Duke well.

The Patagonian lady was now unmasked. Something very severe was said to this character about ingratitude, and it was observed by a Domino, that the mask of decency would be more befitting

than the mask of morality and of severity. The figure was no other than a little poet upon stilts, who in attacking his quondam benefactor, and in lashing his betters, with a small rod which he had in his hands, made a trip and broke down. The wooden stilts appeared; whilst he shuffled out of the room. It is curious how so many bards are lame in one way or other; but a straight forward course suits not the Muses; uneven measures, sportiveness and fancy must lead them, more or less, an up and down dance.

A propos, at this moment a Right Honorable would-be minstrel, who, like the last mask, took his partner from the stage, next made his appearance, habited as a priest of Apollo. He too was upon stilts, which made him much lamer than the little man, who never was accused of a want of measure, but of a want of manners. They both, in hexameter verse,

verse, deplored the depravity of the times, and talked about the balance of power. The peer Edward had heard his father, who was a judge (which his son never can be), say something about justice or her balance, which thus came into his head. After mutual embraces they separated; the peer on a tour of discovery to Italy; the poet commoner, to console himself with his partner. He left the room singing, "There's a bower of roses near Bendermere stream."

Now the illustrious character who had, for a moment, unsuccessfully played the Turk, entered the room again habited (he changes his habits very often) as Comus, with his whole court about him. A mistress of revels, a royal jester, a lord of misrule, or commodore, as a stalking horse, Lord Y-grec as his taster, a band of *fifes* and of other wind instruments, servants of all sizes and servants of all work. He was followed, at a distance, by a Mrs. Fitz

George, as a Grey Sister, and by a lady je ne sais quois, a quondam favorite. The beauties of Caroline's figure attracted his attention; but the mistress of the revels whispered that she was not half old enough for him. Sir Herbert being habited a second time, in imitation of the great patron, in the dress of a German drill-serjeant, received a gracious nod from the illustrious masks first mentioned.

Close by the side of Comus, whose brows were bound with roses and with vine (happy the wedded man whose brows are half so gracefully bound), walked the Earl of Flagiolet, one of the wind instruments of this same court of Comus. He was advised to go in the habit of Apollo, on account of his being imberbis Apollo, or "Apollo ever fair and ever young;" but then the peer, though very fair for a Jehu, is as sallow and cream-coloured as one of his Majesty's parade horses; and again he has nothing

nothing of Apollo about him, unless the being followed by nine ladies at a time might give him some title for imitation.

"There is a great deal of good in this lord," observed the Ciceroni. "He certainly is one amongst the best at the court of Comus, whose bande joyeuse is strangely made up; in so much so, that a certain foreign favorite now exclaims, "Ah! qu'il est mal entouré!" The Baronet, however, was lost in admiration of his High Mightiness and at the splendor of his train, until a groupe appeared which caused him much uneasiness, and which set him on the alert, lest any one should disengage the hand of the lovely Caroline from his arm; the better to protect which, he had assumed the drill-serjeant's costume.

The uneasiness of Sir Herbert arose from the appearance of a band of satyrs, led by one habited

as Pan, and accompanied by a cohort of Greeks. The habit which the lovely Caroline had assumed, encouraged these characters to accost her, but not in the language suited to their dress; for, although they were most of them nobly born, and educated according to their rank in life, they had long lost sight both of the scholar and of the gentleman; they had assumed looser habits than those of ancient Greece; and nothing of the sage or of the philosopher remained amongst them. The predatory system of the Greeks, their astutious cunning, and their well concealed art, were the only features of antiquity which were unaltered in them.

To protect the fair from the attacks of these adventurers, a gentleman, habited as a gownsman from the university, and a youth in the disguise of a Polish lancer, fell in, on their flanks, and completely routed the foe. The former addressed the groupe in Greek;

Greek; for he was a scholar. The latter gave them to understand that they were all well known, and that their handy works stood on record. He reproached them with the plunder of many an unsuspicious youth; and bringing to their remembrance divers scenes at Brighton, at Long's Hotel, in the neighbourhood of Leicester Square, and of Blandford Street, they all took to flight.

"Pray tell me when, Sir Geoffray," (said he to a Baronet of this worthy party) "did the illegitimate descendant of a Scottish chief teach you the black art upon the cards or dice? When were you (to use your own vulgar phrase) put up? When did you receive threatening letters and pay hush-money, rather than be exposed in the transaction? How do you and a brother Baronet's hopeful son, whose transactions in France, and elsewhere, have so dis-

graced him, at present stand? Do you visit him in confinement, or do you affect to cut him?"

Turning then to a lame peer, "Have a care, my lord," said he; "you are known, and I will unmask you if you importune that lady. Neither Mr. B. A. the poet and the blackguard, nor your tiger cup-bearer, nor the honorable B. C. the gentleman miller, nor the Doctor, nor any of the crew from Newgate to Billingsgate, either of your family, or of your associates, will be able to assist you here. You have humour and you might play a better part: it suits not the peer of a sister kingdom to be in the mouth of every Cyprian and of every Greek in town, and to be chronicled for nothing, save depravity."

This spirited sally routed all the Grecian host; and, when the two friendly masks, acting in the

the same cause, though wholly unknown to each other, had cleared the coast, they fell back, each looking on the other in noble rivalry. They both seemed well acquainted with the town, and gave the Baronet a detailed history of their party, which put him completely on his guard. The Baronet requested to know their names; but they declined; each assuring him, however, that a time would come when they would reveal themselves, and that, in the interim, they would merit his esteem, and render him all the service in their power.

Reflecting on the dishonorable transactions of fallen nobility and of degraded gentlemen, Sir Herbert felt indignant for a time, and this casual meeting marred the mirth of the scene; but shortly the merry dance, led on by a Sicilian nobleman, and followed up by all the waltzers and amateurs of quadrille-dancing,

cing, enlivened the scene again. There were rival Vestris's in Count Fortunio the Sicilian, and Lord Mount C——, skipping harlequins, an elderly priest of Hymen, running after an heiress in vain, "where the stormy tempests blow," with many merry makers of antics too numerous to mention.

As to the waltzers, Lady Louisa M—— led the way, strewing flowers, and exhibiting infinite grace; and she was followed by a dancer whose name resembled Folly. Miss S—m—r, a rival Terpsichore, gave her hand to Lord P. and attracted much notice. The Marchioness of D—ns—re as Maria, and once the flower of May, was a looker on; whilst Sir C. H. was a finder of fault, the character which he generally assumes.

Poor Caroline's heart was in the dance; but Sir

Sir Herbert knew not to whom to give her as a partner, and he much feared, if he once lost sight of her, that he should lose her altogether. A senior waltz-party being got together, Lady Hardenberg made herself ridiculous in a party with the fat Countess of S. A. better known by the name of the Nabob's sister, and in the same set with the stiff Countess of L—v—n and Captain C—ft, who was bit, a few years ago, by a mad dancing-master, and declared incurable by his Papa, who then practised physic.

A certain illustrious naval Duke now appeared bound in Hymen's chains of German manufacture. It is supposed that he had run far and near after the hymeneal deity for a long time before he caught him; so that this illustrious Benedict looked not only out of breath but a little out of date. Every one now thronged into the refreshment apartment, and amongst them

them the illustrious bridegroom. The bride looked cooler than he. We shall suppose that the ices and wines are now distributing, and leave the party until the next Chapter.

CHAPTER V.

WHILST refreshments, in the fist style of elegance, were serving out upon plate and china, many a love-tale was told—many a pretty thing was sighed and said. Sir Herbert fortified his post so, however, that all approach was rendered impossible.

Many of the company unmasked for a time; and many a jest was made respecting the characters present. The party in the refreshment saloon had the most fantastical appearance; there being all fancies and all countries. It was generally remarked, that the elderly characters were very fond of assuming youthful habits; and that, under very high patronage, quite novel characters had come into fashion, namely dowager Venuses and Patagonian Cupids.

An

An Anacreon of seventy arrived there from the north, whose gallant son has nearly "half a century past," and whose son, now in the Navy, bears the family name, although an enfant du cœur. "Alas! that noble Marquess his son," said a most interesting figure of a Highland girl, "all loyal, brave and true as he is, has yet one blot in his escutcheon: desertion is a great military crime, yet has he been guilty of it. The rose shall bloom no more in maiden blush on poor Highland Mary's cheek!" (so we will call her for concealment's sake) "no more shall her smile awaken the tender passion! that broken and bruised heart must pine in secret, whilst the venerable old clergyman hangs his head, and hides what he suffers on this account."

Talking of deserters, we shall have to mention another hero, who stands thus accused; but, for the present, let us detail the jokes of the refreshment room,

room, as picked up by the mute beauty, who, for this quality alone, deserves some praise. Seated by the Baronet, and flanked by the Baron Vanderpuff, she heard the following on dits from different masks.

It is said that the Duke of C—— is about to publish a collectiou of love letters, of acrostics and valentines, suited to the meanest capacity, and to all ages and circumstances—amatory proposals, or offers of marriage, for maid, wife or widow, princess or private gentlewoman. This curious collection is not original, but a mere compilation, from far and near, of the effusions of the most noble, nay even of some royal authors ancient and modern. The spelling is very faulty in some of them; but they are well put together, and must have cost the illustrious author a great deal of labour in his extensive travels from the Jordan to the German Ocean. Some of them are from York, from Gloucester Place, from High Wykeham, from

from Keith, and from other places in Scotland and England. Whether the title is to be Solomon's guide to happiness, or the way to get married, or a new way to pay old debts, is not generally known. It is rather supposed that the amatory epistles of the Duke of Marlborough to Fanny Davis, will be preferred.

"It is said," observed a mask dressed as a senator, "that Mr. St——s B——ne, the better to preserve the disguise always convenient at a masquerade, where the canvass turns upon character, and where a scrutiny throws so many out, had appeared in the Speaker's robes and wig, as he could never be expected to be found in them." "Upon the same principles, the costume of Cicero would be a good disguise for Mr. V—ns—t," replied another, "who now more generally represents Somnus, when wishing to be eloquent." "It is said, that Lord Redcastle appeared," said a third, "as the *masque de*

de fer;" but it was observed that "a brazen mask would better suit his front than an iron one." The latter, however, might apply to the heart, and thus his Lordship would be armed at all points to repel the shafts of his numerous enemies. How he came by them, he best knows; nor could he support so many attacks had not his mother (like that of Achilles) dipped him in the Shannon, and rendered him invulnerable and inaccessible; at the same time casting a fine bronze over the modest blushes of his native land, and a composure of feature which might be of brass, iron, or any other metal. "It is said," continued he, "that the statue of Democritus has been sent to Lord L—— near Wimbledon, as a reward for the gravity of his deportment in his ministerial capacity, and as a model for the servants of the crown." The smiles of a prince or of a minister should never be given but for value received.

Here

Here an alarm of a rat threw the ladies into confusion, and put an end to the on dits. Something was said about the animal having got off safe, and hidden itself under the Treasury benches. Sir George W——, a turned coat, a ward of chancery, and a wig turned inside out, were spoken of; but not sufficiently to make head or tail of. These articles took the directions of the Ordnance and of the Admiralty Offices.

The dancing-room now filled again, and the unconcerned Lord S——r C——l was one of the gayest of the gay, in the character of Phaeton. This, after his fall, was appropriate enough; but that rash youth, in his break-neck career, had no companion; —he had no one to ruin but himself; whilst the nobleman in question ought to have a more bitter reflection at heart, and it would be as amiable and just as decent were he to absent himself from public meetings

meetings for a while, since the premature fate of a female finds interest in other breasts, although his may be shut to sensibility.

Whilst the refreshment-room was clearing, a dowager Venus—a Grace by name and by nature, and formerly a Vice Queen, attacked the noble Marquess of Mount St. Jean, and accused him of former desertion. She brought the charge very formally home to him, and reproached him with a want of taste in his present choice. But his Lordship has got hardened in his campaigns; and it is not the first time that he has smoked his pipe to the accompaniment of female tears. He therefore got clear of the enraged duchess, humming the French air "C'est un erreur de la nature." "Let me tell your fortune," cried at this moment a female gipsy who had bewitched more than one in her time. "My fortune is long since told," cried the indignant noble, tired of reproach;

reproach: "my fortune is the fortune of war, and so fare ye well."

She passed on to a youth habited as Freedom. Strange to tell, how folks mistake their character! and how we all fain would be what we are not. "I know you," said the little Zingarella. "Mr. Liberty, you are welcome from the tramels of a prison, and from throwing over." "Speak gently, you little gipsy," said the young man, crossing her hand with a piece of money, whic she rejected. "I know you, Mr. W—b—l, of his Majesty's Life Guards. Have you not jockey'd them, my noble lieutenant? completely thrown them over? distanced the horse-dealer, and silenced the Bench?" The young man strove to get rid of her: but she still pursued and pestered him. "Shall I sing you a song?" continued she:

"How

" How happy's the soldier who lives on his pay,
" And spends his five pounds from sev'n shillings
per day."

" I say W. how's R. the dealer, and how did you contrive to pay two hundred per annum house-rent out of cornet's pay? But it's all over now; you are as white as white-washing can make you, and doubtless you will take the field again as fresh as ever." Here he slipped off, assuring her that she was mistaken; but she put him in mind of too many of his tricks for this to be the case.

" Upon my modesty," said she to Mr. W. P. and, between you and I, that's swearing by nothing at all, " you look as long and as prosperous as if you had not a difficulty in the world. You thrive at the expense of matrimony, and grow fat upon debts and incumbrances; but your's is a thriving family—all promising lads, as 'tis well known, on town. How goes on

on coursing in Essex?" "Be quiet, my dear," said the dashing commoner; "there's metal more attractive; go, and plague some one else; and I'll be for ever obliged to you; there are two elderly gentlemen from Kent and Cambridge, in two characters of the Honey-moon. See how portly the former is; there's cut and come again for your wit. Tell their fortunes in wedlock; but be sure and do not name St. Lawrence to the one, nor Mrs. S— to the other; nothing about foreign parts—about ill treating French priests at St. John's—nor about a certain rock; pass no encomiums on old attachments, and don't hint at cast-off mistresses. Between you and I, that's a sore subject to many of us."—"You may say that," replied the gypsy, and, at this moment, she was in the midst of family concerns of this description. The gypsy herself was Belinda, of whom more will be said hereafter.

Just

Just at this moment one, in the character of Benedict, passed her. "Having lost your own character," cried the gipsy, "your Lordship has done well to take up another. May you succeed better in it than in stock-jobbing, in electioneering, in engaging the bailiffs, and in haranguing the people. Should you take a command amongst the Independents in the south, remember that your lady may insist upon the freedom of election. Come, I'll tell you your fortune. Let loyalty be untinged with hatred and revenge, and unsullied by mobocracy, and you will never have your banner kicked down stairs again. Keep your temper, and you may keep your bride. Beware of St. Stephen's Chapel, of the Tower, of his Majesty's prisons of the Fleet and of the King's Bench. Keep clear of Cape Horn in your present cruise, and afterwards of Bethlem, and you will then not have your principles and intellects suspected, and will come to as safe, and just as

useful an old age as the Earl of D—— your father. Violence of mind or of body often terminate fatally, and suit not the holy and honorable estate of matrimony, into which you have so lately entered, and which appears to be so highly the mode amongst elderly gentlemen." The mask of Benedict retired in a fury.

The hour of supper now arrived. Sir Herbert wished to escape early: but her ladyship insisted upon seeing the whole entertainment. Very vainly, her husband attempted to oppose her, upon which occasion he had a number of very pleasant things said to him. There is a conjugal dictionary of familiar phrases very generally in use with married pairs, the whole of which Lady Hardenberg had at her tongue's end, and we are not quite sure but she might have them at her fingers' ends also. "Was he (the Baronet) going to make himself as disagreeable

able as he did the other night? People should stay at home, who could neither be happy nor let others be so! What a pity it was that some men should ever marry at all! Some folks were only useful as household fixtures, and ought not to quit their firesides to torment every one about them! She had not half as much pleasure as any other person's wife."

Such were a few of the family dictionary quotations on this occasion. The last phrase was a closer to Sir Herbert. He shrugged up his shoulders, and exclaimed in a lowered tone of voice, "Madame, just as you please; we have two more masquerades to attend, and, then, laying much stress on the word, I hope that you will be satisfied; I am tired of this dissipation already." "Fiddle de dee," answered her ladyship; "come make yourself agreeable for once!" (very encouraging) "and let us get a good seat at supper." The crowd was great, yet all sat

down in perfect order; illustrious characters unbent; and prudes threw off the mask; for

" Rigor now was gone to bed,
" And advice with scrup'lous head."

So that the gaiety of the scene was doubled. Lively bands of music struck up; and the whole was one scene of magic and of attraction.

Amongst the company, clad like a herald, the Earl of K. was singled out by an Irish hay-maker, and thus addressed. " Faith, then! and it's enough to put all the pomp of heraldry out of fashion to seé such a King at Arms! The lion too! more like general Jackoo a great deal! That is masquerading it with a vengeance? Pray did you escape from Pidcock's, or from St. Bartholomew fair?" The peer avoided him. " Oh! I know you, by the expression on your sweet face, in spite of your teeth—that is of the want of your teeth! What a fine opening for a female

female angler for a title! Miss E——t was very near jumping down your throat when in Edinburgh; and your head rails would have been no impediment to her." "Where got you that ragged coat, Pat?" enquired my lord, good humouredly. "It's a cast-off of Mr. W——d's," replied Pat: "one good turn, you know, deserves another."

But here comes a camphorated mixture. "Pray Mrs. Chastity, how have you been these many years? What mask do you now wear? Oh! I see it is a half mask, id est, all for love and a little for the bottle. I remember that nun's habit. Your mama wore that a long time, when she captivated Lord L. D. who was in such a hurry to express his passion, that he forgot to get married to her. From a man of such extensive gallantry, a great deal might be expected in the way of breeding, and his daughter has fully justified public expectation on that score. Your

papa too was a member of the h—— fire club; no wonder therefore that

'Black spirits and white,
'Blue spirits and grey,'

may even camphorated spirits, should have charms for you! Poor Mr. L—— was a bold man to chuse the daughter of a gazetted rake and of a lady, the soi-disant Mrs. B——y, who possessed so much tender facility. But what new invention in the way of a preservative or of a preventative may we expect from your bright conceptions? Do you make the surgeon bleed John the footman, by way of seeing the effect which it produces, previous to undergoing the operation yourself; and why did the dark Doctor emigrate from South Street? There is no love without mystery."

"Fie!" said Lord Rosemary, who just came up, and thought himself unknown: "we have found you

you out. You are broad grins begotten by bad puns, the effervescence of vapid wit and stale jokes, heated by royal favor. You are the fumes and vapour of the stage, bottled up for a masquerade, and only fit to be tasted after supper, when "the wit is out and the wine is in." "You may say that," replied the hay-maker; "you are a half Irishman, half poet, half actor, half gentleman." "Then I beat you by half," replied Pat undismayed; "but your lordship labours under a big mistake." (It was not George Coleman the younger, as expected, but a naval officer from Ireland, name unknown, and never discovered through the night, which enabled him to cut up at pleasure.)

"But pray who made a buck of you, my Lord for we know you. I should have thought that you might have kept quiet, and have worn the willow without interfering with other folks. Look at this?"

(shewing his pitchfork) "what is that the sign of?" "Of an Irish bog-trotter," rejoined the Peer. "Yes, and he can make hay whilst the sun shines; although this implement puts some folks in mind of the moon's increase. If I am an Irish bog-trotter, that's my character. Now your's is a dull Dominus in Domino,—a bit of a Lord and a bit of a Cuckoo, as bad a breed as any in the universe, a sweet rosemary sprig of quality, who ought to rue the the very name of Hymen."

"But I say, what blade set you upon me; and has thus sharpened the edge of your wit? By my faith, you are like an old knife, the blade of which is useless, and which has nothing but the horn handle to recommend it. However mild may be your Lordship's character, your bed of roses was soon turned into a pillow of thorns; your efforts to please have been crowned in a very different manner to what you might have

have hoped. You ought to have taken a lesson of your father. No man preserved his game more strictly; but then your Lordship's was a different game; and it may be an useful lesson to yourself and to others who play the love-game at piquet, to beware, like your Lordship, of being caputed. Now fare thee well; for here comes a walking Court Kalendar, an Almanack of intrigue, an ill-bound Love Gazette, a little out of date, I allow; but never out of good inclination. Here's one of the most liberal women in Europe."

"Lady Fl——g, your very humble sarvant. Do you want a man of all work?—an Irish champion to fight your battles? If any one says a word against your reputation, here's your standard bearer" (marching before her with his hay fork)—"Here are the family arms, or rather the family crest. Your Ladyship has changed your name, and

any change was for the better: but you have not changed your disposition. What a tinder heart you must have had, to have been so beset with sparks, and yet to be wholly unconsumed. Do you remember Mr. Sp—— amongst your flames? and the foreign Count? and the Tripot abroad. But, here, great queen of hearts, whose hearts were always trumps, very winning cards indeed,—here comes an Amateur —one who deals in antiquities!"

"Look on that statue, my lord. There is no cold composition—nothing which can quite forget herself to stone! a little touch of the bronze, but of mighty proportions. Worthy Lord, your bridge is not the bridge of Lodi, nor does it stand like the Pont Neuf; but its cartilagenous misfortune, its nasal note and great flexibility—emblem of your mind and heart, discover you under that splendid Greek costume, and the deservedly assumed mask of science which becomes

comes you. Yes, thou noble man of marbles! thou hast deserved well of the state, although thy better half did not assure you of her adhesion after the love campaigns, and all her conquests in your absence. Statues and busts suited not her taste; and it was a pity that you could not have brought home with you aught to fix her fancy."

"But look you, I say, on that fine ruin—does it not remind you" (pointing to Lady F.) "of the broken temple of Venus! What vows have been paid at that unhallowed shrine! What offerings at that altar!" Lady F. passed on. "And you, my good lord, have had your share of amorous adventure. Well do you know the pour and the contre of marriage. Determined to adopt the motto of *Sine me nulla Venus*, you have had your share of that capricious divinity in all climates and in all forms. The devotions which you paid to her were a prominent feature of your character,

character, although, at present, the once prominent feature of that countenance which you shewed to the fair, stands prostrate," (to use my eloquent countryman, that able statesman ———'s words). "The mask, you must find most useful on that account; but the Knights of the crescent are so well known to me, that all disguise is useless. Go; and let the air of Perth brace up your sinews; you will even there find emblems of Venus cast in nature's mould superior to your first favorite Mrs. M—, and more faithful than your last lady." Now, shouldering his fork, and shouting "may your honor be exalted," he joined in an Irish jig.

The dancing proceeded again with much spirit. Paddy's was a capital disguise. He wore the tattered coat in question, a green waistcoat, thick brogues, and had hay-bands round his knees. When the jig was ended, he looked on to see the waltzing, and prepared,

prepared, in due form, to attack the dancers as soon as, ceasing from their mirthful occupation, they might be induced to promenade, and relax the close concealment of the mask and the unabated disguise of voice.—This is a particular to which characters at a masquerade do not sufficiently attend. People are so apt to speak to those on whose arms they lean, in a low, but natural voice, or to forget at supper that many things are revealed which might, otherwise, be concealed.

Lady Philogaul now presented herself. Pat made up to her; and, making a leg, inquired if a native labouring man might get a bit of bread in her service, or whether her extreme love for foreigners was such as to exclude her countrymen entirely from her house. The foreign aide-de-camp, her husband, seemed a little nettled, and disposed to take up the business, but he was given to understand that this is a land

a land of freedom, that all kinds of pleasantries are permitted under the mask, and that, in his own country, he would not have so much freedom of opinion allowed to himself, nor would he be viewed with the indulgence which was bestowed on him here.

The hay-maker then began: "My Lady, for so I suppose they style you, although some call your husband 'un comte pour dire, and some, un comte pour rire;' that French peasant's dress in which you have disguised yourself does not prevent you from being known: but believe me, that those foreign habits do no honor either to your taste or to your heart. An English mercer is better than a count or countess of the manufacture of Buonaparte or of the emperor of Hayti. The tyrant of to-day, may always expect to be the victim of to-morrow; so that on one occasion we may behold the diadem and the star of the Legion, the crown and the order of St. Henry,

gifts

gifts of a black or blackguard-king occupying the throne, and on another advancing to the scaffold. Away! with your regicide nobility, with your revolutionary generals, and with those aide-de-camps who, defeated at Waterloo, and stained with the blood of our countrymen, present themselves in another way, and enter into softer, safer, and more lucrative engagements with British ladies. But if they are to be scouted, what ought the unnatural and unpatriotic female to be who thus makes election of the enemy of her country?"—Lady Philogaul seemed confused, and shifted her situation.

"Talking of elections, here comes a Knight of a different description. The lawyers have the order of the golden fleece amongst them; but that more properly belongs to the Greeks; as the Garter does to our royal family, the Crescent and the Iron crown

to

to the married nobility of old England, and the Shamrock exclusively to old Ireland."

"What about old Ireland?" said a figure in a long robe, with a weather-cock on his head. "Why," replied Pat, "it is a country where there is no varmint. The rats die there of the rot; and (looking at Sir James M° Weathercock) there are neither toads nor toad-eaters. Can you say that for your country? Why, I remember you when you were as good a fellow as could be, you liked a little drop in the top of you glass as well as any man, and would drink, cut capers, and sit up with any student of the three Kingdoms, when you were in the Caledonian capital; but the charm of gold and the passing of the line have great effects upon the constitution. You thought a great deal of the revolutionary French constitution once. Do you remember any thing about kissing

Burke's

Burke's scraper when you were tipsy? Hey, Sir Jemmy, ken ye Doctor P—— Jemmy? and wat ye what he once said to you anent divinity and law, Ireland and Scotland, rebellion and apostacy? Great wits have short memories; and so they ought; else their sudden changes would be more blamed than they are. You once tried the profession of physic; but it did not agree with you at all. You never put any scruples of conscience into your prescriptions Doctor, did you? An author was your next trade; but you took the wrong side in politics, and, like your countryman detected in robbing the orchard and in getting over the wall, you were just gawin back again, when questioned by the other party. Oh! Sir Jemmy, Sir Jemmy! you are greatly below par now; although his lesson seems to have had its effect. But I see that the wind has changed, and that your ensign is going back again." Here Sir James won over the Hibernian by a bribe of gentlemanly good humour, of which he is so capable.

pable. They coalessed, and set off together to play upon others. A female now addressed Sir Herbert and the Baron Vanderpuff in French, and afterwards in German. The latter recognized the M— of A—p, a German princess by alliance. She was dressed as Night, and made some witty sallies; but the Baron soon beat her out of the field. "All hail, antiquated princess," said he! "Thy yellow flag may hang out long enough in vain for love recruits. How many years ago I have seen you in scenic representation, have read your poetry, have admired your variety, but, above all, have wondered at your extensive intrigues! And now a widow again and in the winter of life, you reverse the amorous scene, you show the most complete give and take that ever was known in the annals of gallantry. Long is your list of gallants. Are Count T. Lord ——, &c. forgotten? or does the vapid, superannuated Mr. Sk——n not only amuse you with his slip shod lays, with his hobbling muse, but also

also act in a diplomatic manner to your Highness? Is this envoy extraordinary your recruiting officer for the Paphian campaign? your treasury must suffer if it be so, for there is no conscription in love affairs." Here he repeated some of the amatory lines, and called to remembrance many scenes of vanished enjoyment. This far-dvanced Night now withdrew, extricating herself the best way she could by assuring him that there was more darkness in his brain than in her character. "Cela vous plait à dire," replied he, and they parted mutually dissatisfied with each other.

Next came Sir Cambry ap Shenkin, another dull domino. He and his brother waddled side by side, like Castor and Pollux in attachment; but not in brightness. There was not a sufficient dividend of wit to enable the one to twinkle even in any hemisphere, whilst the other slept in darkness; but whether they were together or separate, single or united,

united, their union of rays produced nothing but obnubilation. "It is a strange thing," said the Ciceroni, "that with the fortune and power of the family, with the vast command over men, mountains and goats, that those brother geniuses can scarcely command a *voice* in the house; and that the one who has almost lost his voice should have the most pleasing delivery; whilst the most audible should be the most offensive orator. Not that they say much; but they have uttered enough to have acquired the nick names of bubble and squeak—no bad family concern. The Baronet is a cut and come again customer at the card table.

"But Sir Cambry," said he to the Baronet, "why do you not get the red ribband for the feats of your regiment in Ireland? you might wear your blushing honors thick upon you then. Taffy is well remembered there, and her Ladyship, your new wife, would

would like to see you decorated as well as another, unless you leave the order to her choice, the decoration to her own hands. The eagle would be a flight above you; the saint Esprit, contrary to your religion; St. Patrick, hostile to your military career; and the Garter above your reach. The lily might suit your purity; but the Elephant would best suit your appearance." "Bubble, bubble, bubble," cried the Baronet. "Squeak, squeak, squeak," responded the brother: but all is fair under the mask; and thus ended the attack.

A couple of flower girls now began their work of torture. "A courtier! by all that is ridiculous," cried the one. "Aye, and an old one," echoed the other; getting hold of Lord Lowtown's arm. "How many have you presented in the Drawing Room in your time? how many years have you been the hack minuet-dancer at court, and been mistaken

taken every where for a dancing-master with his kit in his pocket? And I say," pulling him t'other way, "do you still play so low in the auld toon of Embry? Does your Lordship kneel at the feet of down stairs Cinderella, and rival Crispin in your attitudes and in the humility of your posture! Does the haut goût of low-lived beauty still attract you to the level of a very common understanding? Have golden tresses, worsted stockings and web feet, the real Newfoundland-breed, their usual attractions, in contradistinction to the courtly dames of whom you have so long been tired, and who have so long been tired of you?" "Let me alone," replied his Lordship very sensibly; "I'll say or do any thing you please, provided you do not expose me." A truce was concluded; and we will, gentle reader, call a halt and breathe; leaving Lord Lowtown "aux pieds des Belles" until the next Chapter.

CHAPTER VI.

THE Irish hay-maker and the Scotch politician having now formed a coalition, returned to the room in new costumes. The Hibernian had made hay whilst the sun shone. He was, *Bacchi plenus*, but not less full of wit; and the crafty Scot had changed his character. Like Lady F——'s name and Mr. W. W. W——'s voice, any change must have been for the better. The one, now, was a freeman, and the other a Parliamentary Candidate. The elector had a *carte blanche* in his hat, and a white cockade (no allusion either to Pope, to Pretender or to Bourbon, the people's fancy, but to Candidates in general); their colours ought to be white—be-case, as Pat says, white is no colour at all. The Candidate had a patch upon his eye, in order to show that he was a pupil of reform, that

that he felt the liberty of the subject, that he kept his eye upon the wheels of government, and that he could open and shut it as occasion required. A third joined them in female attire, and the triumvirate (for it was another politician in disguise) struck up in a more perfect union than ever Lord Castle-cat could effect. Betty Martin was so great an acquisition of strength that they now hit right and left, and attacked every mask with three to one in their favor.

"My noble Lord Porttumbledown," said he who represented Betty Martin, "you've been abroad for instruction; but that's all my eye. Joey the singer, and an ex-life guardsman have sung to you to the tune of Six Thousand Pounds, and it's all my eye. A fine regiment yours! but that's all, &c. You're fond of discipline too! but that's all, &c. A great martinet! beloved at Canterbury! as true as a Canterbury tale! and a good hand at a tale yourself! Your men

men would be satisfied with the worst that you could give; but nine tails at a time is out of conscience, noble Peer!"

"Was you ever kept?" cried the hay-maker, now in the character of an elector. "What of that?" enquired the peer. "Oh? that's all my eye. Do you know the old proverb, if the hill won't come to the mountain, the mountain must go the hill? and by the virtue of your oath, pardon me: a Peer's word of honor is enough, and his word is as good as his bond. Did you get a rise in any way from that Hill? Its elevation is to be observed in a certain situation, where protuberances are not expected; and you'll allow, great commander, that had many of your dragoons carried such a bill of indemnity, such a budget of security behind them, the striking effects of your goodness would have been less felt; but your female friend, Madame du Mont, is all heart for you; she

carries it in all directions for you, even embosomed on her back, as Paddy might say. Would that you had more of it."

"Now since over-backing your friends and over-flogging your men, whereby your want of heart and of the bowels of compassion are apparent, allow us, under the mask, to give you a trifling lashing" (here they all joined), "which may teach you your duty better: we will not use our lash to excess, nor quite let the cat out of the bag respecting all your transactions; but only recommend to you a few virtues—prudence, secrecy, mercy, moderation, less pride and more need of it. What are here said and done won't hurt your feeling; it is absent with leave; nor will it make you less bright in the cabinet, nor less brave in the field."

"Success to the Curragh!" cries Pat, on beholding

holding Mrs. B—— in a brown fancy dress. "Success to horse-racing, cock-fighting, private matches, and to every species of sporting: the county Galway to wit! Pray, my pretty country-woman, who's the favorite now? And to be sure, it is'nt yourself, that is as down as any of them! The *brown* mare the better horse! If it was not for women of spirit like you, the columns of a newspaper would have nothing but wants a place in them, from the candidate for a place and pension, down to Dolly the mop-trundler and those who want to accommodate a single lady or a single gentleman upon easy and moderate terms. But whilst we have female sportswomen like you, we shall never want law cases to amuse the ladies at breakfast-time. It is to be hoped, however, for the sake of husbands in general, that a little less freedom of speech will be used by such as wish to keep their wives." (She joins the dance.) "Off she goes to the tune of the honey-moon; hands across and

back again; down the middle and up again; set to your partner; back to back; change partners; and lead off again."

The next to be tormented was Lord Cruiser. This Lord C. is the son of the M. of A——, of whom we have lately heard, and whose extensive gallantry has already been mentioned. His costume was that of a British tar; but he was soon recognized by the crafty Scot, who thus addressed him. "Avast, my good lord, and speak to an old acquaintance. We know you by the cut of your jib, although you have taken so much pains to conceal yourself by that rum looking mask of yours. Whither bound, my Right Honorable friend? Did you put on that jacket out of respect to old England, or for stage effect? for we know your taste for theatricals which you have evinced in the choice of a wife. Your lady mother too was fond of scenic representation; but as to change

change of character, that's another part of speech. Change of scene and of actor pleased her mightily: but as to character, it was always the same, although any change might have been for the better. Far be it from us, however, to visit on the children—vous m'entendez. To do you justice, we must say that you have been, through life, as gallant as your lady mother has been gallant: the change of emphasis is a trifle; but the import of the word far different indeed!"

Turning from Lord C. and taking a domino by the arm, Betty Martin thus began: "A Dandy! by all that's exquisitely conceited. We know you, Lord Lavender. Pray do you want a young woman out of place? and how is brother B——l over the water? when went you over to inspect his feather-bed neckcloth and pillory capes? to see if you tied your neckcloth according to his cut, and if you were

in all shapes equal to your prototype? How dull you must be without brother B——l, the king of your confraternity,—he who taught you to wear stays and to put your neck in the stocks,—who found out, after many years spent in learning to bolster up his neck, that, after all, "Starch is the man!"

"Your useful counsellor in all matters of taste. Pray do you bolster up his credit, or is Monsieur Quillac a man of faith? Does the prince smile on you yet? or do you pass all your evenings with the dowager lady, Lisle Street, and her moral and amiable circle, with Lord Cripplegate and all the worthies of his cast?"

"I remember your father," said Sir Jemmy, a little pepperish or so: "he toiled to little purpose to get a new fangled peerage into his family; little could he foresee his son's celebrity as a Dandy, and

and as a corner-stone of the Cyprian establishment near Leicester Square. However, of one thing I wish your Lordship joy, 'tis the best thing about you, namely your privilege. What would not your Dandy brother, B——l, give for it? It sits most becomingly on you, and renders emigration unnecessary. But really, joking apart, you should keep better company. You are a nobleman not without talent; and it grieves us all to hear you named amongst Greeks and debauchés,—to see you misspend your time with legs and frail sisters, with fellows who are the town-talk for nothing but gambling, rioting, street rows, and for feats in the King's Bench. Keep better company, my Lord; 'tis a salutary advice; for we have a regard for you." "Yes," replied the peer good naturedly, "that's all my eye!" "Where got you that shoe-black's ticket?" said an Irish watchman to Sir Jemmy. "Where you got your popularity and your brogue," replied he: "that

is to say, amongst the blackguards. It is in vain for Lord Mulciber to hide his cloven foot; we know him. But pray, my Lord, don't you think that a black patch on the eye is a becoming thing? 'tis better than one on the reputation. Some are black and all black, witness your right honorable family, and the list of your noble acquaintance, your miniature companion, your subscription-poet, blackguard B——e A——e, your gentlemen millers and professional acquaintances, your Venus of Crawford Street, to whom you act as Vulcan, your duet singer and brandy-faced N——, the merry circle in the family parlour, the fair listeners to your Lordship's imitations, and the Greeks with whom you mis-spend your time, those who call you old B——, the friend of the frail ones, the A. B's. and B. A's. as well as the X. Y's. of your select society. We know how you pass your noctes atticæ, and how useful a member of society you are. Your morning calls and your love

love embassies, executed by the little Mercury who attends you in your shabby gig, are all known to us. Do take a leaf out of Sir John Falstaff's book, and reform. Live decently, my Lord, for you are getting very like honest Jack in size and in appearance. You may yet be reserved for the scene of the buck-basket in your old age. Fie on it! reform, man."

Nothing abashed with all this exposure, Lord Mulciber opened upon them in the truest style of slang, in which a Mr. B. C. an Honorable, joined. So well they played their part, that you might have taken them for guardians of the night, accustomed to the lowest scenes of depravity. They were perfectly versed in the slang of the streets, and in all the blackguard wit of the lowest of the low. It is said that they pride themselves on these qualities; but be that as it may, they beat the trio out of the field.

Sir Herbert now made the following reflections, which he delivered thus to the Baron Vanderpuff: "A masquerade is like an election; let the candidate wear what mask or use what disguise he will, still is every part of his history known. Family secrets, personal defects, concealed intrigues, hidden faults, all pass out. He must endure unpleasant truths; for all is fair on these occasions. Freedom of speech constitutes half the pleasure of the scene; and it really strikes me that a king or a minister may learn a great deal at a masquerade, may get acquainted with his people, and know more about the town than he could learn in a whole life at court. There the flatterer's mask prevents him from listening to the voice of truth; there ambition and vanity are concealed in splendid garments; there insincerity smiles in every countenance, whilst adulation hangs on every tongue. A masquerade may be made an useful thing, and more particularly to one who can

listen

listen and can observe, one who is not blinded by his passions, nor too much interested in the scene himself. But let us hear what this harlequin has to say: he seems to be a funny fellow, and well acquainted with the town."

CHAPTER VII.

The carriage is now at the door, with such post-horses and drivers as I shall not see again until my return. My brother also is in high spirits. Mama looks cross. Bills multiply like flakes of snow, and lengthen as she reads them. "The milliner! twice what I thought. The dress-maker! shocking, an imposition, every thing over charged. The shoe-maker! exorbitant! Did you (directed to me in a dry tone of voice,) have twelve pair of silk shoes in the last two months, besides the kid and morocco, the boots, and the lot of French shoes?" "Yes, my dear mother, the balls you know wear out so many." "Oh! very well; I shall not have enough to take me to Dover." "But I can accommodate you," said my

my brother, "and you won't want your letter of credit until you arrive at Paris."

"The china-man!" "Oh! send him to the steward."—"The man for chalking your Ladyship's floors!" "Send him to the—oh! no; to the housekeeper; I have left money with her for him."—"Mr. Gunter, the confectioner!" "What, three hundred pounds! unconscionable!" "It will do when you comes bax." "It must, Mr. Gunter; but stay, I might as well pay it. I hope no one else will come. There; good bye to ye all; it is time that I should be gone. Drive off and make the best of your way."

Such was our departure; and I believe, if my fashionable readers will recollect, such is the departure of many an elegant for the Continent. The calling in of bills is dreadful. Paying for a few weeks or months in town is a serious thing. A London

don spring is no joke; and well it is when we can make our public departure like my mother. It might be worse, gentle reader. A Sunday morning, or a dark night has witnessed more than one titled emigrant's *depart pour le Continent.*

The plot thickens now, and I have as many adventures to go through as a harlequin, ere I return to dear London again; for it is my first and my last thought; with it I begin, and with it I shall end. The journey to Dover and the packet-boat have no interest. The former we performed as quickly as four excellent horses, changed six times, could carry us, aided by a very light travelling carriage; for my brother's people, his horses, and our heavy baggage followed. The packet-boat had less variety, as we hired it for ourselves exclusively, so that we saw no choice of characters, save the little uncertainty and unevenness of the female mind; and this we brought with

with us, and were less aware of than any of our acquaintance.

We arrived at Quillac's. This house is worthy of visiting for once. It has great attractions for travellers; and arithmetic is well understood there. The bills are à l'Anglaise; but the accommodation is excellent. To be able to eat your partridge with a good soupe au vermiceil, and a number of little expletives in cookery which are new to name as to taste, to drink your Champagne, your strong cup of coffee, and to go to the play (such as it is, but better than the Argyle) all under one roof, without wetting your feet, stepping into a carriage or crossing the street, has its charms, the first of which is novelty; but, barring this, give me old England.

Betwixt Calais and Paris there is nothing worth talking of. We passed or met all classes of our country-

country-people, from the court to the court-yard, and from Countess to the counter-lady, the most affected of the two; each running after foreign fashions different ways; the one to turn her cash out of her pocket; the other to turn her journey, the fashions, and perchance her agrémens, to her own account.

We are told by some author (I forget his name, nor is it worth remembering), that France is *le Paradis des Femmes.* In what it resembles the garden of Eden, I am at a loss to conceive, unless it be from the evil spirit which may be there (although the good King Louis XVIII. says that his people are in the best possible disposition, *dans le meilleur esprit du monde*); for I see less temptation to our sex than any where that can be named. In nothing do the youth of France transcend ours; nor have they aught to render them dangerous to an English woman. I shall hereafter describe these beaux.

Although it be true that a French woman enjoys more liberty than an English woman, yet she certainly is not happier. It is not to throw off a number of those becoming restraints of our sex, which constitutes felicity—it is not to sit at table with the men and to leave it together, to frequent a coffee-house or some other place, which we consider as fit only for the other sex; to receive company at the toilette, or in the boudoir; to have her audience hours and her levé; to assume male importance, and to converse on subjects fitter for the stronger intellect of man—it is not these which can delight a woman, made of our native materials. Is luxury her delight? where can she find its very head-quarters but in London? Is she a savante? Our London circles will produce all that female literature can aspire to; nor are balls and concerts, private theatricals, conversaziones, routes and fancy divertisements wanting here: they transcend those of Paris in elegance and in expense. The

only

only difference is, that the middling and lower classes cannot enjoy them, because they are above their sphere and above their purse; and it is precisely this which gives them their highest lustre and their highest price and enjoyment in the eyes of people of fashion.

The fact is, that *le Paradis des Femmes*, is gone by in France. It existed in the times of the highest refinement, when the brightest polish belonged to la cour de Versailles,—when France was a model for politeness, for gallantry, for dress, and, alas! for relaxation of morals; for that enervation arising from pleasure, from luxury, and from prosperity. The reigns of Louis XIV. and XV. and the zenith of Maria Antoinette's glory, when she was Dauphine, presented this picture.

But who can look for ease and for elegance, for

for gallantry and for refinement, for highly cultivated education in the half-pay list of Buonaparte's disappointed and disbanded cohorts, or even in the *employés contre cour*, be their rank of new fangled *noblesse*, or military honours, what they may! Suddenly raised to a frightful pinnacle of power, taken from the middling and from the lower ranks of society, bred in hardships, in the open air, or the tented field, half educated, and grown mature or grey in the service of the usurper, or perhaps misled boys of decent parentage, or concealed nobles thrust from the class of a minor school, by conscription, into the army, first poisoned by democracy and republicanism, next let out to the plunder of an absolute monarch, and now exhibited as poor turncoats, or as something so amphibious and so equivocal, that it wants a name!

Nay is there any thing even to be imitated in decrepit

decrepit emigrants, half French, half English in manners, broken in spirit, and out of fashion in appearance, who look more like monks and penitents, than like the mingled character of the warrior and the courtier, the hero and the gallant, which existed in the days of chivalry, and which characterised the chevalier François of ancient times?

I could not help observing, at the Court of the Thuilleries, the three distinct orders of beings:—first the old, gouty and infirm, patient and moderate men; secondly, a handful of young and of elderly ultras, who smiled in pity on the first class (at the head of which however is *le bon Roi*), who looked disdain on the third class; and thirdly, those who were the lowest in birth, although, five years ago, the first in situation, namely the Buonapartean nobility, who must have been greatly surprized, a few years back, to hear themselves called Dukes and Princes,

Princes, whilst many of their relations were petty shop-keepers and day-labourers. Judge then what harmony can spring from such a court! and where the loves and the graces, fancy, fashion and pleasure can perch amongst them? The story of the lady's earthly paradise must therefore fall to the ground, as it exists not in a revolutionized state. Love and politics, fashion and riots, the spirit of peace and the spirit of discontent cannot dwell together.

These are good reasons for not being captivated by the French, for not losing my heart amongst them; but there is a better still.—

To be as concise as possible in my description of the people, the men appeared to me like quacks, in good breeding. Their dress leant more to the stiff and inelegant; and their manners partook more of self confidence and of parsimonious education lightly

shed

shed over the surface, than any other nation with which I ever was acquainted. They run as far from the Greek and Roman models as people of good taste, with us, lean towards them in dress. I remember a man, whom I nick-named *Monsieur sure de plaire*, for he accosted you, or asked you to dance with the impertinent expression of—"I am sure I must please you."

The women, far superior to the other sex, however, had a kind of sweet, infantine, trifling and looking-down manner, blended with a good deal of art and observation, which in no wise pleased me. Candor seemed to be, like the white banner, an old fashion difficult to revive, and feebly assumed by those who wore it. There is a wide difference betwixt the emigrant French woman, and her who has weathered out all the storms of her country. The former is far superior to the latter; and, I have

every

every reason to think, that the women of quality, before the revolution, eclipsed them both. Education, in our sex, is stinted as well as in the other; for one woman who has travelled whom you meet with in Paris, who speaks a number of languages and who has a number of accomplishments, you will find one hundred in London.

I must, however, allow one powerful attraction to the French woman. They have a peculiar knack of making the most of a lover. They keep his flame alive, by *des agaceries*; they will try his patience, his temper and his constancy so, that, strange to tell! they are sovereigns of all those hearts, where too great a proportion of mind does not watch over them, and our Exquisite countrymen generally desert our train for the court of Calypso; whilst it was ridiculous to see these danglers so played with, and to hear them, in very indifferent French, generally out-

out-heroding the French cavaliers in compliment and in extravagance, and, if I could judge right, after successfully rivalling them. Thus much for mankind.

Their way of living, in the first circles, is so similar to our own, as to suit me very well as to late hours, made dishes, rich wines (half as cheap again as in London), and a host of public amusements. In the dinner part, I confess that the cleanliness of an English cook delights me more. Here, I must own, that I dread the French cook. He may take snuff; he may be slovenly in his habits; and he is never over nice in the symmetry of a fricassé, nor in the unity of a paté; so that more legs than wings of birds may creep into the former, and more ingredients than we bargain for may enter the latter; thus proving economy at the expense of good taste, and exhibiting a variety of patch-work and of stale materials in point of composition.

With

With their public places I am much pleased; but, as in London, there are only few theatres for people of the first rank to visit; and there, as in England, they are perfect.—The grand Opera, for instance, the Italian one, and the two major theatres, as with us. Our Opera, however, the two winter theatres, our first rate concerts, and our balls at Almack's beat them to nothing; and our private parties, both in number, in style, in expense, in assemblage of beauty, in richness of attire, in profusion of jewels, in taste of arrangement, in decorations, and in the tout ensemble, admit of no comparison. Our wealth and the tranquil state of our government favor this pre-eminence; but, I will not even give up our better taste, and that upon experience and upon conviction, however bold I may be deemed for saying so. The very first English circles are no where excelled, and, save at foreign Courts, very seldom equalled. It is the mistake of class and

not of nation which misleads the traveller; just as the shop-keeper boasts of drinking his Burgundy so cheap abroad, who never sees it at home.

Comfort is not a French word: it is purely English, and, for that reason, is not to be met with in France. Comfort is the effect of cleanliness, of judgment and of foresight; which studies the useful and the agreeable, the pleasure and the convenience of the guest. Thus it is that, even in frivolities, wisdom preponderates in England; whereas, abroad, show, ornament, all which dazzles the eyes, or surprizes the imagination; light amusements, disguised viands, verbosity in speech, sudden change and variety, constitute the amusements which invite and which allure the traveller.

Neither have we that confusion of persons, of offices and of professions, which exchanges the spit for

for the sword to mount guard at the Thuilleries, or dresses your hair in the morning and figures away in a Sunday's dance to *instrumens à tout vent*—quinquette wind-instruments in the open air, and makes a low bow with grace, but with assurance, to his customers en passant.

We have no ugly *laquais frotteur*, who dusts my lady's bed-chamber, nay (horrible to tell) performs frequently all the functions of the chamber-maid, dirty beyond description! yet, afterwards, on the sabbath, is dressed as gay as possible, and figures away with his mistress at this same quinquette, or at the bal masqué: by his mistress, I mean his chère amie, for Cupid is republican enough, in the midst of monarchy, to be of all classes; so is Terpsichore, who is as often disguised as a fish-woman, or as a lady's maid, as she appeas in higher characters. All, in France, dance, waltz, dress, make love, take snuff,

or smoke, the fair sex not excepted; for, there, the dowagers take snuff and the lower orders also, when in the decline of life; whilst la pipe et la tabatière have crept into the first male classes, in order to give them *le ton militaire*.

The few French, who travel, and the fewer who are introduced in our very first circles, when they see our splendid entertainments, our groves of the most delightful and expensive shrubs, &c.; our splendid conservatories, our illuminated halls and corridores, our musical bands judiciously placed to produce the best effect, our services of massive plate, rare china and other decorations at our routes and parties, are astounded; and yet so ill do we manage with our French plays, and with our English travellers, that the French impeach our national taste abroad. The great error, however, is, on both sides of the water, that people call life, what is not high life;

life ; fashion, what is not confined to a much narrower circle than they are aware of; taste and refinement what never can be general, and therefore, where they are at this highest perfection in the very first circle and moderately diffused in the approaching ranks, they may justly be deemed of national growth.

In France, the Buonapartean nobility are rudely deficient in these particulars ; the old noblesse is out of date ; the middling ranks are impertinently flippant and showy; and, as for accomplishments, why your hair-dresser, as I have already said, waltzes and fences and plays on the violin, and your *femme de chambre* dances admirably, and can imitate all the flirtation of a drawing-room, all the airs of attraction, and all the assumption of an elegante, better than any one whom we have on the stage (such an actress we want); yet education she has none: *la danse*, and the love of admiration—*voila tout !* but it is wonder-

ful what a pair of black eyes, white teeth, a cocked up nose (nez retroussé), active person and affectation can effect upon our soft countrymen, who are (they ought not to reproach us) wonderfully capable of sudden impressions. As to deep rooted affections and lasting impressions, we will say nothing of that.

Lady Morgan has given an excellent account of the national character in France; but she has been pleased to mingle politics with it, and that spoils all. She, however, knew what she was about; for, by crying down the *ancien regime*, by detailing the miseries of a *peuple serf*, *corvenable*, *&c.* she has awakened resentments, condemned old errors, and ranged herself betwixt two classes, the *moderés* and the *republicains*, which, added together, form a large mass of friends abroad, and a still greater mass at home. Politics, however, I conceive as introduced into, but not forming a part of national manners. I

may

may be wrong; I often am so; but the subject is dry, and let us avoid it. I could say a great deal more about our countrymen in France; but they will come in elsewhere; and, after expressing my love for my country, and the decided preference which I give it over all others, it is time that I should leave Paris, and commence my travelling adventures.

Ere we quit Paris, however, I cannot help mentioning a scenic caricature on the English character, which I saw at a wretched provincial theatre. As it now occurs to my mind, I mention it, because it completely describes the *badaud de Paris*-idea of John Bull (as he is pleased to call him). This shows the prejudice of the country in its fullest force, as well as its ignorance commensurate with that prejudice. Every where is the Englishman to be duped, to be turned into ridicule, and to be turned into cash, to be frightened, to run away (very unlike an

Englishman), and to be made a butt of. I should apologize for the introduction of this story, did I not know that the feeble efforts of theatrical merit, the coarse jokes and scurrilities of the Argyle and French troop are much of a piece with this performance. Provisions pilfered, a *laquais* caught drinking his master's liquor, a box on the ear, a witty kick, a fall on the reverse of the actor, are deemed worthy objects of mirth for our nobility; and with such evening fare do they presume to treat the high birth and fortune of the country. But when we can be thus gulled, when we can swallow these coarse jests, laugh at these fooleries and take the motley performers by the hand, we cannot wonder at having our taste under-rated abroad, nor at these theatrical caricatures of strolling companies, such as the one which I am about to describe.

The hero of the piece is Mr. Go-dem. The piece

piece opens with his arrival in Paris. He gets out of the diligence, yawns immoderately, and pulls eatables out of his pocket, which he devours most voraciously, speaking horrible, broken French, with an oath, in English, at the end of every sentence. (Very like an English gentleman to be sure!) This causes immoderate laughter. He now sits down; and so immoderately long are the skirts of his coat, that a starved greyhound and a clumsy pointer, which follow him, make their bed on each flap. There is often a delicate hint that one of them soils the flap; an oath is here rapped out; and there is so much point conceived in these two flights of wit and of fancy, that thundering applause follows the *jeu d'esprit!!!* The Englishman now calls for a bottle of wine, and drinks six successively, with the accompaniment of the favorite oath, and *bon* at the conclusion of each bottle. This is considered also very good. By this time he gets drunk: that

is admirable. He makes love to the chamber-maid in gross, drunken, and broken French: this is very well received. He attempts to salute the chamber-maid, who calls him *gros pot à pauf*, and gives him a tremendous slap in the face: this is considered as a very lucky hit. He then falls asleep and snores immoderately:—more laughter. The waiters and waiting maids turn his wig and black his face (more mirth), and the stale pun is made on him; namely, *ma foi, il est bien de la race de Tudor!* After various indignities offered to John, he is carried off speechless amidst shouts and acclamations of joy. He is next represented at the Palais Royale, ridiculously dressed in the last Parisian fashion. His mouth is wide open with admiration of the shops and of the ladies; his pocket is picked; and he is prevailed upon, by a person who makes up to him, by name d'Argentcour, a *chevalier d'industrie*, to go to a gaming-house. Having no money, he gives his gold watch

watch and a valuable snuff-box for a rouleau: he plays and swears as usual; they cheat him very naturally, which is another triumph to the audience; and when he has lost his money, he knocks his head against the wall, exclaiming, *oh! que c'est dure.* This pun is considered very clever. He returns to the hotel, makes love to a young lady of quality very over-dressed, and makes an appointment with her. He is kept waiting a long time, but at last is let in. The lady plays a thousand tricks with him, and makes him go on his knees and vow eternal love to her; all the while laughing at him and at his broken French. At length her brother, an officer, comes in, and strikes him. John offers to box, in a most ridiculous, overplayed manner; but the military man draws his sword and threatens to pin him in a corner. Here his shrieks and fright are great food for laughter. A parley at length takes place; and it is agreed upon that he shall sign a contract in her favor, giving his

his wealth to her, and that he shall marry her. This is accordingly done; and the happy couple are united. The denouement is, that the young lady of quality is the chamber-maid in disguise; and the captain turns out to be the waiter, whose cast-off mistress Jeannetton is. The Englishman is made every body's laughing-stock; but he gets drunk again, and goes off very contented with his bride, crying, *mon parole d' honneur, elle est jolie!* This is considered as extremely humorous; and the curtain drops upon our cheated and degraded countryman.

From this trifling sample, we may judge of the national feeling and delicacy, and of the force of prejudice; for never was any thing more unlike an English gentleman than the brutal representation in question.

Our departure from Paris was now fixed, and we

we had nearly as many take-leave visits to make as we had in town. Letters of introduction, and the number of unexpected acquaintances whom we met in the French metropolis, swelled our list of calls to a great extent. The English circle is very large there; but there, as every where, the first, the select, the polished circle is comparatively small. There was a circle also, nick-named, all the talents; and another very learned and pleasant assemblage of literati, amongst whom, Mr. Cl——d, Sir D—— H——y (whilst there), Lady M. and many other authors and people of science.

My brother got into so hard living with a party of dashing, extravagant military men and other fashionables that I was glad when we left Paris. Whilst there we heard of the Duke. His stay was short; but wherever he was known, he was much and deservedly liked. His mildness, his amiability, a manner of dignity with a total absence of pride, gained

gained him all hearts. He had left the town some time; and, as he travelled very expeditiously, we had reason to believe him, ere this, near to St. Petersburgh. We therefore turned our faces towards the south; and conceived that we were separating every step as far as possible.

Our visits ended, our passports examined, our purchases made, &c. we left the gay city, which disappointed my expectations greatly. The staple commodity of the country, *la politesse Françoise*, has vanished. There is a pert verbosity, and an abrupt but low bow, conceit and self-sufficiency established in its place; but the exchange is lamentable. This my mother felt the more as she had been in France in her youthful days, previous to the revolution. One character has entirely disappeared (he can be well spared), namely the court abbé, *l'abbé de la cour*, that arbiter of taste, that chooser of dress, the

the attendant on the toilette, the repeater of pretty things, and the composer often of namby pamby verses—a pillar of elegant circles, and a dangler at court.

Of one of these clerical Exquisites, my mother gave us the following anecdote to beguile the time. " Monsieur l'abbé ——, a cadet of a noble family, was the delight of his circle. He had that dwarf wit which suits the toilette or the table during the time of coffee. He could make smart little verses, tell amusing stories, prescribe for a sick head-ache, and sing. His person was handsome, and his affectation was immeasurable. This abbé was an immense favorite of the ladies, and his usual song, which he was always humming, was,

" Quand on sait aimer et plaire,
" Qu'a t'on besoin d'autre bien ?"

Being

" Being a great elegant in dress and loving play, his expenditures began considerably to outstep his income; so that he became very importunate to the minister for a benefice. His request was made known to the King, who having also learned a number of his conceits and gallantries, returned his memoir, *paraphrasé*, that is to say with the answer to each object written on the margin. It was simply the abbé's old song,

" Quand on sait aimer et plaire,
" Qu'a t'on besoin d'autre bien?" .

" His disappointment may easily be conceived. It is said however that he entirely changed his mode of living, assumed the gravity fitted for his profession, and was afterwards raised to very high church preferment."

My mother's story ended, we looked out of the carriage

carriage window, and found ourselves at a great distance from Paris. Our postillions were cracking their whips, and making a tremendous clatter as if they were flying express; although seven miles an hour was the utmost extent (scarcely indeed that) of their pace. But this "much ado about nothing" is of a piece with all the rest. For harness we had ropes—the emblems of slavery; and the costume of our drivers was the same, which my mother had seen thirty years before. So much for improvement! alas! dear England! Liberty and my country! there is nothing like ye in the world.

CHAPTER VIII.

Of our journey through France and Italy, I shall say but little, as London is my principal object; and to that delightful place I shall bring back my reader with all possible expedition.

Wishing to see as much as possible, we hired horses, which we put to our travelling carriage, with the intent of proceeding about forty miles per day, and of stopping at every town worth seeing, both for the sake of amusement and of rest, and for the purpose of diverting my mind from being engrossed with an object, to avoid which was the very end of our journey.

The party consisted of my mother, my brother and

and myself, my own maid and two men-servants; but one of the latter misbehaving at Paris, we discharged him, and proceeded with a single footman.

When on the confine of Italy, we met with the following adventure, the actors in which were French disbanded soldiers. Just on the French frontier, we had a wood to pass, where our postillions stopping suddenly, they informed us that a small box had been dropped, which was fastened outside of the carriage, and one of them offered to go back for it. He did so accordingly, and lost three hours in a fruitless search. By this delay we were benighted, and could not proceed to the first inn on the road, marked down, by us, for stopping at.

A lone, dreary house by a wood side now presented itself as the only asylum for the night. When we entered it, we were seized with horror. A

miserable

miserable bed-room, with two beds, was offered to us; and the servants were to be accommodated in one occupied jointly by one of the landlord's sons.

We now observed sitting round the fire a number of men of the most ferocious appearance, who eyed us with a mixture of curiosity and fury. My brother-in-law suspecting them to be banditti, and having heard of a regularly organized band of that kind in this part of the country, imparted his fears to me; but begged us not to be alarmed, as he would make the servants sit up in the room with us.

This arrangement very highly offended our host; but my brother insisted upon it. My mother and I took out our own bedding and slept on the floor, in one corner; my brother slept in another; and the servants lay down by turns on a wretched mattress on the floor against the door, which we also secured

secured with a nail to prevent its being opened. It may easily be supposed, that sleep was a stranger to our eyes. Indeed the state of apprehension under which I now laboured, is not to be described.

In the middle of the night a noise was heard similar to persons cutting out the centre pane of the window. My mother gave the alarm. My brother instantly rose, ordered his man to baricado the door, and immediately advancing to the window, fired his brace of double-barrelled pistols through, and charged them again; having most fortunately all the necessary means of so doing about him, and the servant standing with a double-barrelled gun cocked.

The noise brought to the door the landlord, who demanded admittance, and asked why my brother could be so mad as to alarm the house and break his window? to which my brother answered by communicating

municating to him his suspicions, and by adding that he would let no one enter the room until day-light. Our host enraged, swore that he would burst open the door; but my brother assured him, that the servant was now prepared to lodge the contents of his two barrels in the brains of the first who entered, and that this should be followed by the discharge of his four barrels, after which he should arm us with re-loaded fire-arms and would join his servant in cutting down singly each man who presented himself at the door. The landlord retired with horrid imprecations.

I had fainted away; and I know nothing which occurred till day-break; when my brother let his servant out of the window with orders to reconnoitre the house, then to come round to the chamber door, and there to give a private signal and he would let him in. He did so accordingly, sword in hand, in a style of surprizing bravery, and to the no small annoy-

ance

ance of our host, who denied that voices were heard round the house, and that any attempt had been made on the window; adding that we must all have dreamed of this affair or be touched in our intellects.

The report given by the servant was that a great quantity of blood was under our chamber window, which he could have traced to the neighbouring wood. When this was narrated to the landlord he looked confused, and said that he had just killed a pig—an occurrence which was impossible, in this situation, without our knowing it. Besides it was so improbable at such an hour; the blood being quite fresh and being tracked for a considerable way. We made no breakfast, paid a most exorbitant bill, and prepared to depart in the morning early. The post-boys, the landlord's son, and every person about this wretched house, bore the appearance of mystery and of horror.

We

We travelled in a state of mental agony not to be described. Our nerves were shaken; and the idea of our escape struck us almost dumb. Each looked on the other; but no one could break the silence.

The inn, at which we should have stopped on the night of our alarm, was only six leagues distant from the wood-house. Arrived there, our spirits sunk so, that we could proceed no further: and if there had been as much danger as at the last station, we must have succumed. My mother and I were in a high fever; the servants were dejected and incapable of travelling; and even my brother appeared to have fallen into a state of torpor.

An excellent dinner, preceded by a few hours of rest, however, so refreshed us that we got into better spirits. We began to exchange our mutual ideas

ideas on the past, and communicated them to our *aubergiste*, who merely raised up his shoulders, looked grave, shook his head, and observed that the wood-house had a very bad reputation, and that such stories were told about it, that no traveller ever thought of passing a night there. He gave a glance at our postillions, which meant, " ye too, ye knaves, have been in the conspiracy;" and we determined to dismiss them, paying them for the whole journey, which we did accordingly.

The master of the inn seemed to take a deep interest in our escape; and after dinner suggested the propriety of our waiting on the lord of the manor, who was also a magistrate. With this my brother complied; and, on the following day, four of the men whom we had seen sitting around the kitchen-fire, and whose appearance had so alarmed us, were brought before him and interrogated. One was dis-

patched for the trunk, which was lost in the wood, and the others were detained, with a threat, that if he did not return, his father's house and his own head should suffer for it; and that these suspicious characters, his companions, against whom many complaints had been preferred, should be kept in irons and seen daily in order to be identified. The wretch who was dispatched flew with fear and precipitation, whilst the other three desperadoes were horror-struck.

On the ensuing day one of them offered to give evidence against his accomplices, which was received; and officers of police were sent, in secret, to watch the motions of the landlord's son. The result was the discovery of the following black conspiracy, and of a gang of robbers organized for the purpose of plundering travellers, in general, but the English in particular.

The

The evidence was a wood-cutter. He got acquainted with a disbanded soldier, who worked occasionally with him, but whose vicious habits inclined him rather to pleasure and idleness than to hard labour and industry. Their acquaintance assumed the form of intimacy, and that intimacy, naturally, produced mutual confidence. One day the soldier represented to the witness the hardships of his (the disbanded soldier's) lot, forced as he was to labour hard for the maintenance of a wife and children, and unable after all to earn more than could procure dry bread and water, with, now and then, a few vegetables.

He afterwards proceeded to state to him, that, if he would accompany him to the wood-house, he would put him in a way of bettering his fortune. He complied; and after being plied with liquor, he learned that the project was no other than the murder

and robbery of an elderly lady and her daughter, who were benighted. This was effected, by the keeper of this den of thieves, his son and the witness, in the following manner.

One of them came and terrified them at the window, which inducing them to fly to the door of the apartment for succour, they were dispatched in the dark by the other two. The third flew from the window to alarm their servant, sleeping in an adjacent stable, who in hurrying to the door of the house, was surrounded by the three and stabbed. The dead bodies were then buried in the wood, and their gold and jewels distributed amongst the assassins.

This band of robbers had now grown into twenty; but on the night intended for our massacre, only six were present, including the landlord and his son, two of whom were shot by the fire of my brother

ther through the window, and one was desperately wounded. On that occasion the two companions and our drivers, who were bribed and in the conspiracy, were anxious to remove him to a place of safety, and were fearful that either his being found, or even the traces of blood, should discover the whole on the ensuing day and produce their apprehension and the destruction of the house. Moreover, they dreaded a second fire, which might prove fatal to them; whilst the landlord and his son were posted at our door.

These, after giving a whistle, which was not answered, perceived that their accomplices were either shot or had fled panic-struck; and hearing my brother and his servant's resolution, besides the assurance that the females would defend their lives to the last—a happy invention of my brother's, but not founded in fact, they also were panic-struck, and

threw away their arms. The servant likewise having discovered the blood, and the drivers being intimidated on their return by the firm countenances of my brother and his domestic, combined with the landlord's confusion and dismay, and by their being armed with pistols, sabres and gun, whilst the other villains dared not to return in day-light, disconcerted the whole plan, and was the means of our escaping. This was the second deed of darkness in which the evidence had been employed, and he appeared in a most distracted state of mind.

We afterwards learned that the one who was sent back for the box, which was lost on purpose to create a delay, was pursued and taken by the police, as was also the landlord, his son and the other three. The evidence's life was spared; the others suffered. The house was demolished; and our drivers were sent to the gallies. Thus ended an occurrence which will

will never be effaced from my remembrance, and which had nearly cost us our lives.

After this we proceeded into Italy which, also, at that time, was dreadfully infested by a most numerous, resolute, and well armed banditti, regularly commanded and organized, and which is now scarcely dispersed, after sending a regiment to destroy them, after bringing a great number to public execution, and after exposing the heads or limbs of those brought to justice on posts fixed at about a mile distant from each other on the high roads. The English were pointed out as the greatest objects of their spoliation.

From our *sejour* in Italy, little novelty can be culled. I therefore spare my reader's time in detailing it. Whoever has a heart must become an ardent admirer of that country. The finest Greek and Roman schools in painting, sculpture and architecture,

the venerable ruins of superb and gothic edifices every where inspiring the mind with amazement and with delight, the awful images of burning mountains, cities engulphed and buried in the bowels of the earth, the bewitching enchantment of music, a language whose very prose is poetry and whose poetry is the sound of magical delusion, a brilliant sun, fine climate, romantic scenery, and endless variety, render Italy the Eden of the world; whilst science crowns her the mistress of the earth.

Florence was a little London. The English, here, as in France, herded together, and thereby reaped not the benefit from their travels which might be expected. But John is a gregarious animal; and there is no changing his habits. Indeed some of them, I would not have changed for the world. A few of our English over acted an assimilation to the manners of the inhabitants, and became nothing short of ridiculous.

Amongst them were the Marquess of *******, Lord B——e, and Sir John S——. These gentlemen were so brimful of virtu, that they stood motionless before a fine statue, wept at a fine drawn vocal sound, shivered at a musical accompaniment, and were convulsed at a picture of Salvator Rosa. They lisped and murmured in conversation, and played all the actions of pantomime in their commonest intercourse with society.

I was vastly mortified one day at a Condessa being ready to faint when I entered the room, on account of the odour of some *huile antique* which I had used whilst brushing and arranging my hair. Nothing is more common than these ladies affecting to be overcome by our odours, and crying out *una Inglesa*, the moment we appear in sight. These Italian dames, however, have powerful attractions. They are enthusiasts in love; and one of them made

a deep impression on my brother's heart. Let our English youth beware of them.

I am now returned to my native land!—A host of invitations await me!—Here's a ticket for the Argyle again, where all the world will be! After all, I say—"*Vive l'Angleterre!*" and, furthermore, in contradistinction to the old French very trite remark, "*Il n'y a qu'un Paris,*" I stoutly assert, in plain English, that there is but one London.

I felt the glow of patriotism on landing at Dover; but I felt the glow of pleasure on arriving in London. What is like a good English inn, or hotel? where every thing is neatness, cleanliness and comfort, —where you are not annoyed by sanded floors, wet napkins at dinner, and by cold marble tables, or else by articles covered with oil skin, or deeply clad in table cloths, in order to conceal the poverty of the deal

deal-machine under it; for these contrasts of misery and of poverty are to be met with in *salons*, where all the rest is mirrors, chandeliers, lustres, ornamental furniture, wax-lights, trumpery taffetas curtains, gilding and frippery; exhibiting meanness and magnificence side by side, a display of expense, and a want of convenience.

Farewell now sparkling-eyed, obtrusive, pert, little ivory-toothed *femmes de chambres* tripping about, *marchandes de mode* cheating *mi ladi* and ogling *mi lord*, swarthy cooks, who look like the essence of brown soup, and talkative dancing partners, who fancy themselves the prettiest things in the world. We are now going into polished London-circles, which certainly beat those of all Europe. am delighted to be at home again; yet feel a sort of confidence at being a travelled-woman. With how much

much more consequence I can take a seat at table, or occupy my place in our box at the Opera! Of how much more I can speak (a sensible pleasure to us women) than before my journey.

However, before I proceed any further, I request to be permitted to take off my Paris bonnet. I look frightful in it. Let me think a little, for that is necessary. I must also compose myself, and not play the Frenchwoman nor affect the traveller too much; for nothing to me is so hateful as your modern patchwork books tacked together with half sentences of French and of English, merely to show the reader, that the author has read Madame Cotin, Madame de Stael, Chateaubriand and Mercier, &c. as if the sensible peruser could not read the original either in its native language or by a good translation himself, with more effect than in these puny extracts. Therefore deter-

determined am I to be quite the English woman, as shall appear in the next chapter and throughout my work—Now for the Argyle!

CHAPTER IX.

On entering the French Theatre at the Argyle Rooms, the first person who accosted me was Lord ——, as odious and satirical as ever. "You look vastly well," he drawled out, "since your Russian tour." "Russian tour!" said I, with surprize—"my journey through France and Italy you mean." "True, I had forgotten!" "Pardon me," said I, with a significant glance, which showed him that I knew how much he was my enemy. "I declare I am mightily glad to see you" (making mightily a word of about a yard long, and drawling the whole out in his affected, half nasal, insipid tone. This I begged leave also to show him that I doubted).

We had scarcely entered our box, when we were

were nodded at by a legion of beaux and belles. Motions on the hands and of fans, salutations with the eyes, elevations of eye-brows in token of surprize, artful and studied smiles, more with the view of giving grace and lustre to the smiler's features, than to countenance and welcome us, beamed all around.

There was, at this very mediocre performance, all the world of fashion, three of the Royal Dukes, all the ambassadors. The Marquess of C——y, the Earl of U—— his father, the Duke of A— and gentle Duchess, the Orlando inamorato, Lord M. S——t, the minor Terpsichore, Miss M——y, Lord W——, capering Miss R—n—n, the Countess of St. —— Colonel U——, as easy and as affected as ever, Sir G. W. and scornful wife, besides the sad ruined remnant of the Dandies, the cream of the Grand Exquisites, half the Bond Street Insipids, added to many

many minor twinklers in fashion's hemisphere, came there to borrow brilliancy and refulgence from the greater lights..

I never saw the P—— look better for many years. That dimpled smile of condescension, which is peculiarly his and which beams warmly in the autumn of life, gave him a peculiar grace, and seemed like a preservative against years. *La Marchesa* was at least in the plenitude of her charms. Poor lady J—— looked as if she were cut out by her daughter. The dowager Duchess of—— was eclipsed by the youthful Countess who came out this season. The foreigners of distinction were a good foil to our *noblesse*; for I never saw a plainer turn out. Lady Ch—m—t was positively the prettiest woman there..

Some oddish coincidences occurred in the theatre of which I shall speak hereafter: but what annoyed

annoyed me most of all was the proximity of Lady Mildew. She quite haunts us. After an absence on the Continent, to be tacked like a pale in a park, side by side with her at a theatre, when scarcely returned from our tour, was almost insufferable: 'twas as bad as the adventure of Monsieur Tonson—completely one of the miseries. She had got with her a listening novice on town, and an old tabby Baronet's widow who lives upon soups, tea, paregoric and scandal. I was forced to hear her.

The substance of her remarks were nearly as follows: "What a size a certain person is! I see that courtly and portly are now synonimous terms; and some folks take their favorites, as people of quality hire their footmen, merely on account of their bulk and stature, without any other good quality. What a homely person the little Duchess is! how unlike the wife of a hero!" "Oh! she does very well for a town-

a town-house fixture," replied Lady ——; "and that is the quality in which she acts: some people an't very fond of taking their ladies out with them."

"Who would, that has good taste?" (joined in conversation my odious Lord above mentioned). "Would you have a prince or a hero, or a nobleman, or a man of fashion, or a decent fellow even, form a tête-a-tête picture with his wife, like a William and Mary half-a-crown? monstrous! incongruous! abominable! Bad taste indeed, Lady Mildew, to be lumbering about with a whole family establishment! A pretty joke! The Duke is good enough" (strong stress on the word) "for any husband." (Lady Mildew.) "We do not all think so, my lord: on the contrary, as Ninon de l'Enclos says, *on n'est pas Heros par tout*." An immoderate laugh within the bounds of fashion (no national roar, or hearty expression of mirth) followed this speech; the association of Ninon de

de l' Enclos and Lady Mildew being so truly ridiculous. (Lady Mildew playing her fan and bridling.)

" Did you" (to the tabby Baronet's relict) " observe how flirting and amatory a certain very great personage is?" (Lord Odious, for so I shall, in future, call him). " Madame, that illustrious person is possessed of infinite fancy; and fancy, Madam, creates love; and this is (I say it for your ladyship's information) the only creative faculty about many people. Your ladyship, for instance, has a brilliant fancy" (he gave great weight to brilliant, and winked at General C. of the Guards), " yet you have never created any thing beyond a story" (a look of surprize all round!——a blush on her ladyship's cheek!) " when I say a story, I confine myself to a tale of" (a pause) " a little, severe, satire," (the three words drawn to the utmost extent of syllabling, thus—a little, se—vere, sa—tire) " or," (with an ill-natured smile)

smile) "any other tale which a—mused your ladyship—and—friends—at—the time"—(all with rests and pauses.)

"Therefore," (added he with a triumphant lit up countenance, meaning "I have you I think") "we will not say too much about creative powers: they are oftener inconvenient than" (another private signal) "otherwise in high life. But the Philandering system of the great Don in question is an admirable thing. Amatory fancy, Madam," (fixing my scandalous relative) "is like a great coat, or rather like a woollen night cap or a Welch wig," (no reflection on Wales) "it keeps an elderly man warm by inflaming his head, the healing whereof throws a glow over the person and has a capital effect." "You are the devil," cried the General. "Not at all," replied my Lord, "I am her Ladyship's most humble servant."

Looks

Looks of confusion and scorn passed between Lady Mildew and Lord Odious; but she made a rejoinder, and addressed the widow, turning her back half upon the Peer, and half looking "this is too bad, too much, not fair." "Am I," said she, "mistaken, or had not Mrs. Paragon ra-ther light-ish, I mean red-ish hair last season?" "She had." "Bless me! then the raven has taken possession of her head this year." (A laugh.) (Lord Odious.) "Madame, there has been a great flight of crows this season: they are mistaken by the ignorant for black game; but they make game of those who mistake them. The female bird, Lady Mildew," (looking fixedly at her) "is very dangerous, and the female will follow the male, as birds of a feather, &c." (Another signal.) "But hair and smiles, and bloom and all things may change in time."

"They may," replied Lady Mildew, tapping the palm of her hand with her fan, impatiently; "and so may

may opinion, honesty, sentiment and truth, taste, propriety, and even good breeding." "What a torrent to pour on the peer!" "Lady Grizzle," said she, turning from his Lordship and changing the subject, "do you not think that Lady A——m has mistaken the geranium for the rose in choosing her vegetable bloom?" "And an angle for a curve in adjusting her eye-brow," replied Lady Grizzle! "And," resumed Lady Mildew (with an unnatural assumption of gay levity), "I think that Monsieur Fusil has mistaken his part: he does not play *d'apres la nature*." "He is not singular in that," insinuated, very unwelcomely, Lord Odious.

Lady Mildew drew up, and, with an air of firmness and disgust, addressed him briefly with "My Lord, if you could find any other person to whet the edge of your uncommonly polished wit upon,—if you could make choice of another box and of another party

party to torment" (the word party was adroit), "we should feel equally obliged to you, and you might be more welcome." "Madam," replied the peer, with more grace than he had hitherto assumed, but with the same ill-natured and unmanly severity, "I have ever been the slave of your Ladyship's wishes, and I withdraw."

Lady Mildew had recourse to her aromatic vinegar: she was quite spasmodized. I could have found in my heart to give her her old remedy, the Madeira or the Noyeau; but time and place and circumstance forbade. She soon assumed a hysterical laugh à la Miss O'Niel; it was as trying an effort and quite as natural.

She now nodded familiarity to Lord M. S. "That is a gentleman who is half married," said she; "for he has got his own consent. And that," said she,

she, pointing to the Honorable General M——, "is the most impudent fellow in the world. He scruples not to tell a daughter how much her mother was in love with him—how like she is to an old sweetheart of his, and other incongruities equally inadmissible in civilized society. But I must speak to him or he will tear my reputation to pieces. Your most obedient, my dear general. As great a rattle as ever! you are the evergreen of green Erin your country; you have certainly borrowed the art of growing younger every year." "You do me proud," said the general with a look which spoke a hoax, and seemed to say, "you flatter and fear me."

I now quite felt for Lady Mildew, and turned round in order to hear no more from her quarter. My left hand neighbour was not less censorious. "Don't you think," said an elderly beau, name unknown, to Lady ****, the Queen of Clubs (as I call her),

her), "that the Marquess of C——y is a dreadful wreck? There is a great deal of loose materials about him! What a pity that we cannot be always young!" Her ladyship half sighed, half smiled. "I don't know," replied she, laying a deal of emphasis on I don't. "Your ladyship has no right to know," rejoined he: "you are a fixed star in the firmament of attraction, around which we minor planetaries revolve with delight." Very high flown indeed thought I. "But did you observe the placidity of the dowager Duchess, on touching, *par hazard*, her old flame the Marquess with his second-hand lady?" Exchange is no robbery in high life.

Here my mother, overhearing each side, and not considering either as calculated to improve me very much, drew off my attention to the performance. It was le Bourgeois Gentilhomme. We both agreed that it was below a second rate performance; that

the stage, the scenery, or rather the poverty and want of scenery would be considered as contemptible in Paris, and that the Committee might, if they chose, manage matters far better. Mademoiselle Camille's Angelique was the best of it; but she would be thought nothing of in France. The rapturous applause of Monsieur Perlet, we deemed little short of ridiculous; and my mother was of opinion that his loudest applauders were Exquisites who came in in the middle of an act, and understood nothing of the plot, and stupids, like Sir G. W. who scarcely could speak a word of French: such is the rage of fashion! Lord ********* indeed might put up with this indifferent performance, because it was thought that he was not indifferent to one of the performers!

We now had a visit from Lord B——gh——t in our box. He is going on a diplomatic mission. I know

know not a man of better taste in every thing, and particularly in theatricals. Could he not give them a hint? The suspended tongue of scandal now began on both sides of us.

"Did you remark the looks which passed betwixt the brunette Marchioness and the Duchess of A?" cried Lady Mildew, "and the serenity of his Grace, the ogling of Lord A——e, whose son looks as old as himself, and the sulkiness of the Countess of L——? I suppose she is disappointed of her waltzing partner."

Lord B——r——n was made the subject of conversation on our left hand. "I cannot bear that Lady B——," said Lord Odious, "for being the cause of our losing B——. A poor spoiled, insipid thing! One of your only children! She was as fit to be mated with B. as the wren is for a partner to the

eagle! What, though his fancy did roam? What girl of fourteen, who is well educated and in high life, but has made her mind up to that?"

"Oh! ho! there's Lord L—s—le: do you want a qualification for a vote?" The Duke of D—— now became the subject of their slander. An affair of gallantry abroad was mentioned, which Lord —— treated with a degree of pitiful contempt. "The Duke!" exclaimed he with a laugh! "poor thing! *c'est impossible.*" This was Arabic to me; yet I felt hurt at the circumstance.

The curtain now dropped; and, in going out, I overheard a fragment of conversation between two persons, not in the spring of life, and who have been separated for many years by various ties and by various wanderings and adventures. You, my friend,* will understand it, and I give it as I heard it. "Odd

as

as it may appear to you, after so many years, I protest that I never meet you without an indiscribable sensation of tenderness." (The Lady.) "I can-not (making two distinct syllables of the word) believe that." "By my soul you may." (A sigh and a pause.) "Then—I thank you."——Here followed a languid shake of the hand, but a very expressive look of kindly reminiscence. You know my weakness; and I felt deeply interested for both. Mr. P. the diplomate, now passed, and handed me to my carriage.

I cannot quit the Argyle theatre without making the following reflections. In spite of its being so very mediocre, in spite of the very humble abilities of the performers, who are applauded and received, nay caressed by our nobility and fashionables in a way

* From the authoress to her friend, to whom the work is addressed.

which must astonish them; yet, is there one attraction in this theatre, namely that it is such as has no charms for the middling ranks of society, and that, in attending this place of very indifferent amusement, you meet but the one class, which is the first. The only means indeed of keeping a place of assemblage select, is either to fix the price or the nature of the thing above the reach of the vulgar. The latter too, is the most efficacious; for money is no bar in London. The rich and the ruined, the high and the low, all contrive to command money for their pleasures, however miserably they may be forced to sacrifice for their attainment.

Another and my last reflection was, how necessary it was to have pleasant neighbours as subscribers to the boxes on our right and left hands, else may one be tortured by such canversation as may mar a whole night's happiness. I have known, abroad, the greatest

greatest friendships and the pleasantest acquaintances formed by this neighbourhood. On asking the lovely Countess who she was speaking to, she answered me, *c'est mon murmitoyen*—her neighbour at the opera, only separated by the wall of the box. The term amused me.

I had forgotten to mention that young J—— came lounging into our box. It is astonishing how this young man has insinuated himself into high life; yet do you see him in the first circles. He possesses the most *mauvais ton*; he is a boaster whose affectation is immeasurable; he speaks as if it cost him a great sacrifice to honor you with his insipid conversation; yet he can boast of himself by the hour. His wines, his horses, his country-house form his favorite topics. The Prince is never out of his mouth; and he is flattered that Lord —— should compliment

him on being the most dissipated young man of his age. He really is the mere vapour of fashion.

I picked up, however, a piece of very singular information from him. Lord ——'s conduct to Lady Mildew so surprized me that I mentioned it to him; and he promised me to explain it the next day, being then engaged to a quadrille ball. I shall therefore now retire to rest, and make it the subject of the next chapter.

CHAPTER X.

YOUNG J—— made his morning call according to promise, and explained to us the mysterious business respecting Lady Mildew. The substance of it was, that (as I have before remarked) pride and a small fortune prevented her from forming a matrimonial alliance at an early period of life. At first, she assumed that severity of manners, that harshness of judging, that prudish deportment, so common to elderly spinsters, and professed a hatred for men. At length, still more advanced in years, Cupid played her a very mischievous trick by mollifying and inflaming her heart, and by making her susceptible of a very violent and extravagant passion for a young midshipman of eighteen, introduced by Lord James O'—— (who, *soit dit en passant*, a certain illustrious

personage counts as one of the only three gentlemen in the navy!—a circumstance highly complimentary to this gallant corps, and not quite politic to express) into our family. The good lady overwhelmed this youth with caresses, with attentions, with marks of admiration. She waited on him personally in an illness, during his visit to the family. Finally she left nothing undone to prove her attachment, which the unexperienced youth received as pure motherly kindness. Many broad hints, many opportunities were furnished by her ladyship to the youth; but, instead of assuming the ardour of an impassionate lover, he merely obtained the familiarity and confidence of a son, calling her his mama, his dear nurse and the like. The former title favoured her designs with the world, and permitted certain kind freedoms which did not expose her to censure; but the boy's want of penetration mortified her in the extreme. Her passion had now reached its height, and her Adonis (for he

was

was uncommonly handsome) was forced to go to sea, without her having made the least impression on his heart. He put to sea, and left her inconsolable. She now went on a visitation (for her visits are far beyond the common length) to Lord ——, where Lord Odious was also residing for a few days. Her affectation of regard and her immeasurable regret here became ridiculous. She had now quite forgot the rigid vestal——the man hater, and conceived that this appearance of sensibility gave her *un air d' interet*, and took off from her years. She became the object of general ridicule, and it was hinted to her that, at her time of life, she could not expect that a young man could think of her. This was still more mortifying than all the rest.

Lord Odious, a wary and experienced rake, a cold systematic seducer, a heartless libertine and an ungenerous man, watched all her motions, and conceived

conceived that it would be no very difficult undertaking to make her his victim. There was no other object at the castle, either to exercise his talent on or to make the object of his triumphs. Lady Mildew was not then, positively forbidding, and her title gave a zest (to such a wretch as his Lordship) to amorous enterprize. He accordingly plied her with a few attentions, vitiated her mind with loose and warm sentiments, and ultimately obtained his wishes. Her age and want of attractions were not calculated to ensure his friendship; and he afterwards made her the object of his ridicule. In return for this, Lady Mildew grew furious, which had no other effect than to complete her exposure. The adventure, however, passed in the country; his Lordship went abroad for many years; and the tale died away as other tales of scandal do.

Lady M. now assumed a more than ordinary prudishness;

prudishness; and is, I believe, a hater of the sex; but her severity towards her own is at least commensurate to her mistrust of the other. Returned to England, Lord Odious was informed that her Ladyship had not spared his name, although she took such care to conceal her *faux pas*, that it was wholly unknown to my mother, to myself, and to all our relations. It will be a fine triumph, however, to those females who have come under her lash, to have this history spread abroad by his Lordship, whose conduct last night is now fully explained. He is a monster; but, I fear that there are, in high life, more maiden aunts, and venerable vestal cousins situated like her Ladyship, and who owe to their *peccato celato* the immaculacy of their reputation.

Not content with unfolding the history of Lady Mildew's adventure, young J—— amused us with his own successes, and was proceeding a little too

too much *en detail*, when my mother cut him short, and pleaded an engagement to get rid of him. "Do my dear Lady ——, let me read you these billets doux from Lady A——," said he, "before I go. Not that they rival those of *his Grace of M—— to F——y D——s*, which are to form our Christmas amusement." But she obstinately negatived the proposal: and we got disencumbered of him at last.

We were engaged to the play, and had taken the stage box. Miss O'Neil was to perform; and the house was crowded with much of the quality and fashion in town. Mrs. B——m, that successful leader of fashion, was of our party, as also our eccentric guardsman. That Narcissus R——n, then of the Life Guards, honored us with a call; and the ultra affected D—s—y gave us a drop in for a few minutes, just long enough to be perceived and to distract the surrounding spectators, to offend the plebeians

beians as he calls them, and to laugh at a murmur and a partial hiss.

This, by the bye, is a sensible pleasure to an Exquisite, or to a party composed of the very cream of fashion, who invariably gaze contempt, look on each other and smile their language of disregard for public feeling, when, by tittering at a deep scene of tragedy, talking loud and almost all together, so as to drown the performance, or coming in late, they annoy the middling ranks who came to attend to the play. This is all very *comme il faut:* nay an unqualified laugh, convulsing every hyper-elegant is quite admissible if the vulgar around you are mopping their tears up, or melting into sympathy at the tragic scene. *Ah! qu'ils sont bêtes,* is a very legitimate expression on such an occasion.

I had almost forgotten to name Lord James Ladybird,

Ladybird, the royal aide-de-camp. He was fluttering from box to box, and murmuring agreeable trifles into divers ears, floating from one beauty to another, and paying his brief visit to each female fashionable in the house. The murmur of his voice, and his culling the well bred trifles of the day reminded me of the following lines of Guarini:

Dov' ape susurrando
Nei matutini albori,
Vola suggendo i rugiadosi amori.

He is certainly one of fashion's insect train; but 'tis a good creature after all. There were also present the dashing Lady Ann C——n S——th, the dancing Count de L'ai——le, Lady F. Fitz——, the commercial Dandy, Lady W——r, who honored her husband with the name of a stupid beast and seems to be wedded only to his property, Colonel Bow—r, the Duke and Duchess of A——, sitting like two tame caged doves, General V——s and Colonel H—n—y

H—n—y of the Guards, so generally and so deservedly favorites, the faded Sophia M——s, with many more too tedious to mention.

I shall now say a few words of our two national theatres. The existence of the one absolutely necessitates the existence of the other. This I was let into by Lord B——, and by some of the high life committee. For the one is to the other, just what the opposition in Parliament is, namely a check and a stimulus to the other; else would the manager grow lazy and economical, and we should have a family party on our boards, or something in English nearly as below par as our foreigners of the Argyle theatre. The existence, however, of two such extensive theatres is the cause of their debts and incumbrance. Yet, out of this evil, arises a benefit to the public, which the rivalry of the two houses produces, neither of which can yield to the other in point

point of performers, performances, dresses, decorations, scenery and expense.

With respect to Miss O'Neil, her concetti are admirable; but she has always extacy or agony before her eyes—the stupor of incipient madness, or the convulsed expression of distress. Her love is delirium; her fear is annihilation; her anger is despair:—if she die it is in torture; if she weep it is in torrents, and sobbed out in horrifying tones: that hysterical laugh of hers is wonderfully pourtrayed, but too often exhibited: in a word, she studies more the anguish of passion and the excess of suffering than the graceful attitude, and the pompous dignity of tragedy, the euphony of grief, and the magic of mild female attraction. Consequently her parts are over acted; her shriek almost threw me into fits; and whenever she falls, I tremble for a compound fracture of a limb. Charles Phillips, the bard of Erin,

Erin, has beautifully pourtrayed her as Juliet in the sixth edition of "The Emerald Isle." He is said to have produced this sketch completely *con amore*.

In quitting the theatre, the crowd was immense; the constables could not do their duty; earrings were torne out; purses and trinkets, watches and handkerchiefs stolen; ladies knocked down; carriages broken; and many other accidents occurred. I was leaning on my cousin's, from Eton, arm; but the pressure of the crowd was so great, that I was violently separated from my party; both our footmen were knocked down; and I was lost in the crowd, and petrified with fear for a minute or more. In this miserable situation, a very elegant young man, bearing the decoration of a foreign order, offered his protection, and saved me from being trampled under foot. Although thus decorated he was an Englishman; and I felt confidence in the bravery and honor

of

of a British officer. He succeeded in finding my mother and a portion of our party, and in bringing us to our carriage; but we could not venture into it, on account of the pannels being split by the pole of a chariot belonging to Count P——.

During this Fracas the Honorable ******* ****** was employed in punishing (as he termed it) a hackney coachman. He was greatly commended for his science by some fashionable Ruffians of his acquaintance, and lauded, in the highest terms, by the mob, for what they, very genteelly, called his pluck, and his giving the fellow fair play; for a ring was formed. To me all this appeared savage, degrading and abominable, and only tended to excite my disgust and to increase my alarm. The nonsense of the gentlemen-millers was almost unintelligible to me; but I heard young B——t, the Baronet's son, cry, go it *******, that's your sort; whilst another,

other, with a tooth-pick in his mouth, observed, "Coachee, you've picked up an ugly customer there," (and addressing the Honorable) "deal it out to him, my good fellow." Surely such scenes occur amongst *gentlemen*, in England only!

Our chevalier now put into his own carriage and walked home, requesting the permission to enquire after our health the next day. We missed my dear brother on this occasion; for I must observe, he had now gone to rejoin his regiment, and we were actually very uneasy at not hearing from him. What a horrid thing is an English mob, witness the disgraceful scenes at the hustings, at Covent Garden, mobbing of the foreigners of distinction the last peace but one, the rude and brutal treatment of the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge almost sacrificed to John Bull's vulgar curiosity. Abroad all is order at a theatre. The military keep all in subordination. Honor is afforded

afforded to nobility; and respect is shown by the inferior to the superior classes. But I remember when making these remarks to my relation the admiral, he coolly observed, that our constitution did not permit of the general interference and government of the military; and that, such a John Bull was he, he had rather see me squeezed in a crowd, than that crowd trampled down by the military, or the people oppressed by an absolute government. I bowed submission.

Our gallant defender paid his morning visit; and to our astonishment, we recognized his countenance. He had served with the Sicilian army; and had met us, or rather had followed us (for his tour was not purely the effect of chance), to Florence, to Naples, to Pisa, to Rome and to many other places. We lost sight of him at Paris, and thus picked him up at the theatre. When he ended his visit, my mother

mother gave him an invitation to dine with us in three days after; and we both agreed that he was a most amiable, charming man. We wondered at the same time how he never got introduced to us abroad; but there was a reason which he not very long afterwards explained.

The post now brought us a packet from my brother. It was opened with thrilling anxiety; and it contained an account of the perils which he had undergone by sea; but consoled us on account of his delivery and present safety. He had lost every thing which he possessed, and drew on my mother for a large sum. This was answered with heartfelt readiness; but her banker breaking at the same time, very much distressed her. I mention this circumstance as connected with our history.

CHAPTER XI.

When we had recovered from the successive emotions of doubt, fear and rejoicing, we were plunged into the greatest surprize by receiving a letter, without name and evidently written in a feigned hand, regretting my mother's pecuniary loss, and covering a bank note for one thousand pounds. Many apologies were made for the liberty thus taken; and in case the sum was of no use, she was requested to return it directed to A. B. to be left at Ransom and Co's the bankers in Pall Mall. The very delicate epistle concluded by saying that a time might come when the writer would make himself known; and, in the interim, Lady ——— might rely upon it that he was a sincere, respectful, and silent friend, and that his writing this letter was known to no one upon earth.

earth. My mother immediately ordered her carriage and went to the banker to return the money; but could discover nothing more than that the bankers had orders, in case a parcel came directed thus, to take it in. They knew the person for whom it was meant, who very often received letters thus addressed, in consequence of acts of benevolence performed secretly; but they dared not reveal his name.

It struck me that it might come from our eccentric guardsman, and I taxed him with it at the Opera; but his answer was, "I protest that it is not I, nor will I take merit to myself for what I have no share in;——me, I never did a generous action in my life; it would be too much trouble. Believe me, I am a d—— selfish fellow; love N°. one singularly; consult my own pleasures, my own ease, my looks, my comforts as much as any fellow. No fellow puts himself less out of the way than I; but as to the

d—— dress, if you want a thousand I can lend it you; 'tis a mere bagatelle; I often lose as much at play, or throw it away in some foolish pursuit; your Ladyship may have the money if you like it." This I declined.

"Look at that d—— Tramezani," cried he, on our dropping the subject; "see the fellow making a leg for some dowager Lady. The town has spoiled that fellow; the silly women have turned his head. I am told that he receives as many love letters in a morning as would paper his room, and gets as many presents as a successful Cyprian; I hate the fellow, and all affected fellows." "Do you," said I, bearing a little on the last word. "I do from the bottom of my heart, myself excepted," answered he: "But who would have thought that Miss Prudentia —— would have made advances to the fellow? Apropos, I must go to Lady Lovejoy's box, to hear a matter of great

great moment—nothing less than the faux pas of a relation of mine; but I will not tell it to any one until I am quite certain. The papers are full of nothing but these affairs now o'days. By Juno, you are as sure of meeting one at your breakfast as you are of seeing the Lottery puff, Day and Martin's blacking, and advertisements of quack medicines which promise us a continuance of youth and enjoyment *finalle cenere*, as the Italians say. But I must be off. Will you have what I offer?" "No." "Then *sans adieux*. The devil is in the woman. I am not very often refused: but—your most obedient."

We had now a sort of a bow from the insipid W——y C——n;——I say a sort of bow, for his head was literally in the stocks, and his stays so tight laced that he could scarcely breathe. Our bending belles who have a *penchant pour tout le monde*, and our straight laced beaux who cannot

stoop to any condescension, form a curious contrast. The old banker was also in his box and fell asleep. With all his money, I should be sorry to have such a sleeping partner in my house. Lady L——r——l looked enchantingly. She again is a fine contrast to her cold, stiff, ministerial spouse. Miss S——r of doubtful origin, to whom a lithping thing, just come from Italy, made the following pun indicative of her name, *Tu sei Amor*, was there also.

We were saluted with fans by about a dozen at once, and acknowledged by the proud Marquess of D—— and his most accomplished wife. His Lordship looked like any thing but an Englishman. The black Dandy also favored us with a nod, as did Lord Clumsy and his rib, just come from Paris. Sir W. W. spluttered at us just as if his mouth was filled with hot cockles; and his brother gave us a squeak not very unlike that of a mouse in the agony of being entrapped.

entrapped. Lord E— seemed to cut us, on account, probably, of the failure of the banker; and a certain upstart commoner H——r, raised into notice by the professional abilities of his father, quite made love to me, conceiving that the loss of fortune makes titled dames very easy of access. Doubtless he has found it so; but here he was mistaken. Lady Newfangle also favored us with five minutes visit in our box. I shall give her at full length hereafter. She is the wife of a nobleman, but sprung from trade, rich, talkative and ridiculous, with the very worst taste in the world. I never see her but I think of what Gil Blas said to the Archbishop of Grenada: "*Je vous souhaite toutes sortes de prosperité, avec un peu plus de goût.*"

Our faithful follower and new acquaintance, whom I shall hereafter designate Fidelio, did not fail to pay his devoirs; and, from his air of confusion

and timidity, I had no doubt but that he was the anonymous offerer of the thousand. I taxed him with it; but he denied it most obstinately. We now met with some travelling friends; and we enjoyed the proud superiority of talking of foreign countries, of scenery, of festivals, of foreign Courts and of virtu. There is no place of amusement, in my mind, so polished as the Opera. The middling classes and even *les nouveaux parvenus*, do not enjoy it. They look grave, they applaud mechanically, they do not observe the point in comic operas, and but half conceive the exquisite taste in harmony. The recitative, in which I delight, fatigues them; and the ballet is the only thing which they can share the pleasure of with their more polished and travelled neighbours. A drawing-room and the Opera, are alike in this, that both are above the vulgar; they know nobody at either; they indeed are like fish out of water, dry, heated, tired and out of place.

In

In the course of conversation this night, I mentioned our escape from the robbers; and Fidelio informed us that he had nearly fallen a victim to them also, and merely escaped by the swiftness of his horses. He added a circumstance of atrocity to their proceedings, which was unknown to me until then. It was that they had, in the forest, taken possession of a ruined and deserted castle, and made it weather tight. They had also barricadoed, and, in a manner, fortified it, by a portcullis, a fosse, &c. Here were dungeons and subterraneous passages, gloomy cells, and catacombs, bars, bolts and iron chains. Not content to rob and murder on the high road or elsewhere, by a refinement of cruelty, they sometimes led their living victims to this infernal mansion. There, by starvation and torture, they forced discoveries of where property was to be got, and made some of their writhing victims draw drafts on their bankers, dated from some other place, accompanied by letters stating

that they were taken ill at such a place, detained unexpectedly on their journey, with divers other modes of accounting for the draft, which these monsters first negociated and then dispatched their prey. After this recital, I cannot wonder at these monstors being destroyed and gibbeted in order to be a terror to others.

When Fidelio left us for a time (for he returned to conduct us to our carriage) I overheard the conversation of the neighbouring box. It was upon the subject which our grand Exquisite had broached; and was as follows. "Who would have thought that Lady ——, of all women in the world, would, at her mature time of life, have so lost herself? Her's was, however, not a common case. Women in general expose themselves, by their vanity, by their impatience of controul, by their blind security, or levity of conduct. Evident partialities, marked preference on the one side,

side, and assiduous attentions on the other, give cause of suspicion. Thence arises dryness towards the legitimate partner, and mysterious conduct. Some good natured relation (as in the case of Sir Thomas S—— and Madame la Banquiere) interferes, watches, pries and gives out hints. Servants are put in requisition, and the affair is blown: or some d—— old maid (remember 'tis a gentleman who is speaking) sighs and regrets, and gives advice and throws out hints, and the husband is put on his guard, and all is discovered? or the fair delinquent gets over-impassioned and must elope with her paramour, either for fashion or for passion's sake. (A loud laugh.)

My mother thought this subject a bad one, and tried to turn aside my attention; but the curiosity inseparable from my sex, and my mutinous and rebellious ears were deaf to her conversation; but quite alive to the improper subject. "*La verité est*

ma devise!" I speak truth equally for or against myself. I caught the continued thread of the subject at this passage.

" In the present instance, none of these common disclosures have taken place; no imprudence has placed a guard over all her actions; no partiality was suspected, until all at once, a refinement of feeling, an aching bosom and a proud spirit conspire to drive the faithless fair to an unexpected, unwelcome and unnecessary confession. She throws herself at her husband's feet, and acknowledges herself to be unworthy of his confidence; his smiles (she says) assassinate her; his kindness drives her to despair; the sight of her children betray her reason; she can no longer live in such a state; she must fly from the world; but, above all, from her injured lord. This is purely a *maladie Anglaise*, a sentimental delirium, a practical romance. Here, in a moment, have doubts been

been thrown upon the ties which bound a father to his children. For my own part," continued the speaker, "I consider her last imprudence the greatest of her life. A French woman would have known better; but 'tis all over with Lady ——, for Lady Mildew has got the story, and she is calling the poor penitent all the monsters on earth."

Here Fidelio made his appearance again, and my continued attention to this account made me forget the performance. The curtain was just about to drop: so let us drop the subject and throw a veil over this self punished offender. Fidelio saw us to our carriage; and my good mother preached a sermon on our road home. Its moral was, that guilt, however concealed, will always come out at last; that an illicit passion is its own destroyer; that jealousies, humiliations, desertion, self-reproach mar all its hours

hours of enjoyment; that what the blind paramour takes for a bed of roses, is a couch whose pillow is planted with thorns; that divorced wives are always suspected—always despised; and that the author of their shame is, frequently, their severest censor.

All this my good mother enlarged upon, and added ten times more; but, to my shame be it spoken, I forgot it all, whilst I perfectly remembered the scandal, and could not help pitying the poor weak woman. On my arrival at home, I eat like one who had taavelled all day, drank some Madeira and water, and was preparing to say *buona notte*, to my *carissima madre*, when a letter, in the same hand as that which contained the offer of money, was presented to me. I opened it eagerly, and shall communicate its contents in the following chapter.

chapter. Poor Lady ——, I dreamed of her all night; but *bisogna riposarme,* for I must not forget that I have been in Italy.

CHAPTER XII.

THE subject of this letter was to inform me that I had thrown my heart away on one who had forgotten me; that the Duke was, abroad, the gayest of the gay; and that he had formed an attachment for a *bella signorina*. At first, I treated this information with contempt. I almost justified him. What claim had I on him? It was decided that we were never to be united; but, such is the pride of a woman's heart, that I felt, in spite of every effort, wounded in the most tender point. I could not, placidly, relinquish the affections of one who had first gained possession of my decided preference. A very able French author tells us that woman is jealous, "*même avant que d'aimer*;" and I believe that he is right. Where our pride is in being preferred, we are even jealous before

before we are in love. But the truth is that mine was an early and a sincere attachment. There were shades and links in it, too fine, too fascinating to be described, and although I was driven from myself by amusements, by company, by change of scene, by constant occupation, and frequently attempted to be estranged from my attachment by reports of his indifference, of his failings and of his change, yet, do what I would, I might truly say,

But ever and anon of griefs subdued,
There comes a token like a scorpion's sting,
Scarce seen but with fresh bitterness imbued;
And slight withal may be the things which bring
Back on the heart the weight which it would fling
Aside for ever. It may be a sound—
A tone of music—summer's eve—or spring,
A flower—the wind—the ocean—which shall wound,
Striking the electric chain wherein we are darkly bound.

This letter had thrown me into the deepest distress, in spite of all the first attempts to parry the blow which it struck to my heart, in spite of my womanish, would-be scorn—my retaliative spirit which told me that it was beneath my dignity to waste my affection on one who was so changeful, so cold, so indifferent towards me. I prepared to dress. I looked over a dozen dresses: I turned over again and again all my finery: it would not do. I tried to make myself "look provoking," as the song says: I wished to be delightful to all but to the Duke, to captivate all hearts and to be indifferent to them all,—to make myself of such beauty, worth and consequence as would constitute me an object of regret at some future period to my inconstant. I even planned the flirting with Fidelio, in order that the report might go abroad. Would it mortify the false swain!

All would not do. My dresses displeased me,

I looked

I looked horribly; I felt none of the *amiable folie* necessary for flirtation, for shining in society. I quarrelled with my maid; I then shed tears, when alone, for being so hasty, so bad tempered. It was not the poor girl's fault. I dried up my tears for fear that I should be thought in love; I called back my attendant, and gave her a couple of dresses. "There," said I, "I have got out of conceit with these dresses; I shall not wear them any more; but they will make up nicely for you; and" (in a subdued tone of voice) "I have been rather harsh with you this morning. I am out of spirits; I am not very well; my nerves are so very weak, that I start at the very opening or shutting of a door. One is not" (in a kind tone) "you know, always in the same spirits."

The poor girl, who is greatly attached to me, burst into tears. "Indeed, my Lady," replied she, "you are the best of mistresses—the most generous, the

the most considerate, the most kind. It is my duty to bear with any unevenness of your temper, if it existed; but you are always good to me. I dare say I was very awkward about your Ladyship this morning. I am all of a flustration since last night. Something has happened which has vexed me grievously; but it a'nt worth troubling your Ladyship about. A thousand thanks for your generosity. I'm sure I'll wear the dresses 'till there a'nt a rag of them, for your Ladyship's sake." "Not quite so long, Susan," said I, "both for my sake and your own; for you shall have other dresses long before they are worn out. You are a good girl; take away the dresses, and return to dress me in an hour." She left the room, smiling through a tear. I felt that she was a sister; and so pleased with her was I, that I could have liked to have taken her to my arms, had not the world's fetters and that cruel word, propriety, said no.

I now

I now took up my harp. Nothing is more soothing than the concord of sweet sounds. Music always calms the agitation of my mind, lulls it into a kind of pleasing dream, and awakens every sympathy of my heart. My eye now fell on some pieces which I had learned in my earliest years. One song in particular, now almost obsolete, struck my fancy: its accompaniment for the harp is of a gentle melancholy nature. It recalled to me the days of my very early youth, tender friendships, early habits; and, although no longer in fashion, I recommend it to my female readers who are harpists: 'tis from the imagination of Milico: its words begin with

" Ho sparso tanto lagrime
" Per amolir ti il cor."

I was recovering a little when a violent knock came to the door. I flew away from my harp, as it did not accord with " not at home." In the interval

of

of learning the nature of the visit announced in thunder (for thus our demi deities of fashion proudly announce themselves when they visit us), I learned my poor waiting-woman's story. A plan had been laid, by Lord Odious, to ensnare her virtue, and to ruin her reputation. An old woman was detached with a parcel as if coming from her friends in the country; and she was invited to go to a house where she would hear of something for her good. She heedlessly obeyed the summons; and after much good advice from a female old monster, to better herself by leaving me, she was introduced to Lord Odious. Wine and presents were displayed before her; promises were lavishly made; and at last, to persuasion and flattery, threats and violence succeeded. The detail is odious and horrid to humanity. Nature revolts at such scenes; yet they do exist, and that in high life too. Lords ——— and ——— well know it. Their female ambassadresses, Mistresses F. W. W. &c.

W. &c. &c. are versed in these wiles. Suffice it to say that my poor girl escaped, and that the odious peer was disappointed.

Should Lord D—— peruse this chapter, let him remember his brutal violence to a chambermaid in the north of England, who fractured her leg in jumping out of a window in order to avoid his infamous approaches. Such men are a blot upon nobility, a stain upon the character of man, a disgrace to humanity. The unfortunate girl in question is related to my maid.

When I had heard her artless relation of this vile affair, I enquired respecting the noise at our gate. It was lady H—— who called personally and dropped an invitation-card for a dinner party at H—— House, that focus of literary fashion, that centre of attraction for all the titled publishers and needy flattering

flattering authors in town, particularly of the saffron and blue tinge. My brother pretends that Lord H—— and Lady Caroline L—— are like amber, particularly the latter, and draw straws, shreds, and all kinds of trash towards them by their attractiveness.

Fidelio next paid his visit; and I strongly suspected that the second letter, as well as the pecuniary offer of assistance, had for motive to detach me from my first attachment, and to draw me towards himself. Vanity! my reader will say perhaps; but we are all more or less vain. I shall be excessively so if I amuse my reader, who at all events will learn some truths, unwelcome to a few town-friends; but, *n'importe.*

The space of time which passed betwixt our attending a dinner of the talents (some of the administration and some of minor talents which pass current

current and for sterling at H — House) was filled with the blanks of ordinary fashionable life, visits, airings, rides in the Park, dust-gathering, the fatigue of trifles, the sameness of public places, dull routs, and duller conversazioni. I shall therefore, in the next chapter, conduct my readers straight forward to H——— House, and into the circle which is to be found there.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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